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Favorites**

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And Cheesy
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Can Grow**

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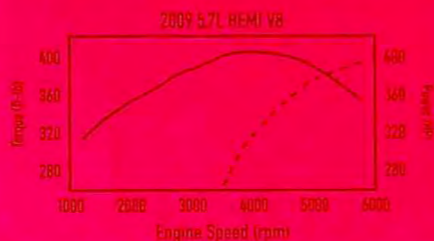
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plus:
**Our Annual
Holiday Dinners**

SPECIAL SECTION

POWERFUL ENOUGH TO PULL THE ENTIRE TRUCK INDUSTRY IN A WHOLE NEW DIRECTION.



370 horsepower @ 5500 rpm, 387 lb-ft of torque @ 3500 rpm (EPA-estimated)



Despite all of its big talk, when it comes to pushing the boundaries of new technology, the truck world has been downright timid. But all of that *just* changed. Introducing the all-new Dodge Ram 1500. Now available in the roomier crew cab size. It's our boldest, most advanced truck ever.

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Borrowing from the world of Formula One racing, our HEMI V8

now has Variable Valve Timing (VVT) for better performance, improved efficiency¹ and more torque, resulting in better freeway merging acceleration while towing than Ford or Chevy². Combined with other advancements, it helps our 5.7-liter HEMI V8 deliver the best combination of horsepower and fuel economy^{3,4,5} in its class.

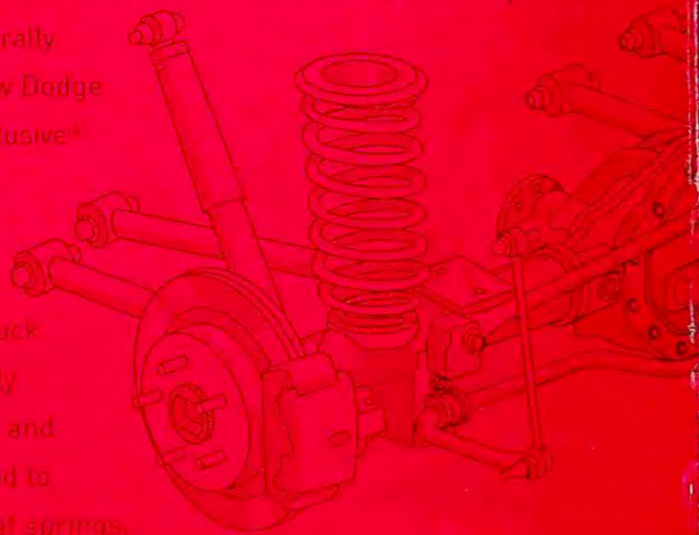
A GAME-CHANGING SUSPENSION.

Maybe you should sit down for this part. Literally. Because the new Dodge Ram's class-exclusive⁶ rear link-coil suspension system is truly a revolution in truck comfort. It greatly reduces friction and weight compared to conventional leaf springs.

The advantages of this new suspension include a smoother highway ride than you get in a Ford or GMC truck⁷ without compromising payload or towing capacity. You'll also experience improved control and more precise handling so you'll feel more confident driving on all kinds of road surfaces.

MORE ADVANCED TRUCKNOLOGY.

With available uconnect web instant WiFi⁸, everyone in



¹Based on manufacturers' preliminary fuel economy estimates of 16 city to 20 highway mpg using EPA methodology. Results depend on driving conditions, location, history as well as other factors. ²Comparison based on 2008 Ford and GMC, diesel, all configurations. ³Comparison based on 2008 model year trucks using EPA-estimated 16 city to 20 highway mpg. ⁴Always wear your seat belt and obey traffic laws. ⁵We tested the 2009 Dodge Ram 1500 crew cab pickup. ⁶Class is crew cab pickup. ⁷Comparison based on 2008 Ford and GMC, diesel, all configurations. ⁸uconnect web instant WiFi is available on select models. See dealer for details.



board has Web access. For added safety and security, the standard Electronic Stability Program[®] has 5th order Sway

inches of leg room and four more cubic feet of interior volume.

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like heated and ventilated front

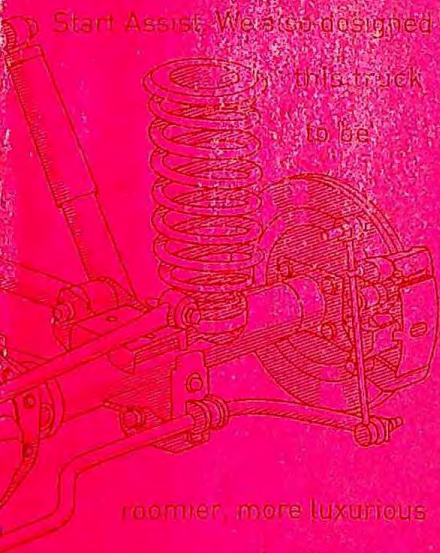
seats, class-exclusive[®] heated rear seats, and even a heated steering wheel. To top everything

off, the all-new Ram is backed by the industry's only Lifetime

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Dodge Ram Crew 1800 take on all kinds of extreme challenges. And crush every preconceived notion you've ever had about trucks. Dodge. Grab life by the horns.



DODGE

THE ALL-NEW DODGE RAM. NEVER BACK DOWN FROM A CHALLENGE.

SALES: Carries 2009 Dodge Ram Crew 1800 4x4 5.7L, 20-45 mph acceleration towing 7,150 lb. [†]compared equipped 2008 Ford and Chevy. ^{††}See dealer for details. ^{†††}Based on 2009 MY Ram 1500. ^{††††}Based on Automotive News full-size pickup segmentation. ^{†††††}Subsidiary required with company. ^{††††††}Direct drive capability not available on 5.7L diesel pickup, Sprinter, Ram Chassis Cab, and certain fleet vehicles.

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& desired gifts
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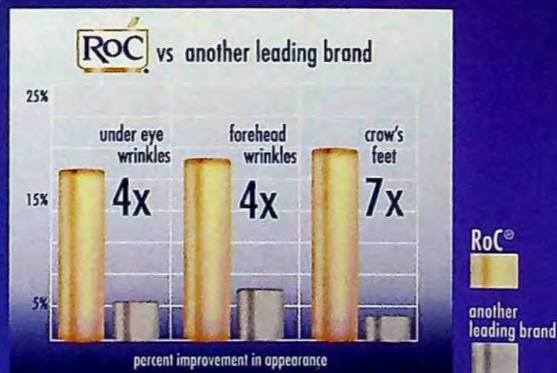


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THE PROOF



learn more about our clinical results at rocskincare.com

*on average, 10 years back to the look of your skin based on diminished appearance of wrinkles after 12 weeks use in clinical testing. ©RoC 2008

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Volume 43 • Number 11

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76 Break Bread Together With their city on the mend, these New Orleans friends gather to give heartfelt thanks.



Enjoy the Season!

p.76 Close friends share a meal and celebrate the healing of New Orleans.

PHOTOGRAPH: BETH DREILING HONTZAS / STYLING: ROSE NGUYEN / FOOD STYLING: MARIAN COOPER CAIRNS



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Check out our events calendar with fun-filled days of arts and crafts, food, games, and activities: southernliving.com/calendar.



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On Our Cover: Offer a festive table of Turkey Tenderloins With Cranberry Sauce (page 114), Roasted Acorn Squash (page 14), Simple Pecan-Green Bean Casserole (page 116), and Mini Pecan Pies (page 150). Photography Beth Dreiling Hontzas; styling Lisa Powell Bailey; food styling Vanessa McNeil Rocchio

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Letter From the Editor

DEAR FRIEND,

This is the time of grand celebrations and my family's favorite holiday—Thanksgiving. It culminates with a traditional meal at home, where Pam, my sons, and I gather around our big oak table to break bread with Pam's parents and my sister. So naturally when I read Senior Writer Donna Florio's story on a group of New Orleans friends who gather to share a terrific meal, it inspired me to reflect on what we do around our table. The realities of what the folks in the Crescent City have been through in this post-Katrina era make me realize that wherever the Thanksgiving meal is served, we should use the time to count blessings instead of lamenting issues. I hope you feel the joy and happiness in this story, which tells how a fabulous meal shared at the home of Richard and Mathilde Currence salutes the season and this glorious Southern city. It starts on page 76.

Of course, no November issue would be complete without our annual "Holiday Dinners" special section, which starts on page 123. This year our editors focused on giving you more economical and time-saving choices than ever without sacrificing a bit of quality or taste.

Speaking of quality and economy, be sure to check out our healthy holiday gift guide (page 85), "Fix-and-Freeze Favorites" (page 104), and our story about growing fresh herbs on your windowsill (page 52). Each of these articles is packed with ideas.

Now all of you who have kids of a certain age—the ones who are way past thinking it's cool to be with mom and dad—might need a different kind of bonding experience other than the Thanksgiving table. Travel Editor Carolanne Roberts found the perfect answer: a family cruise. Look for her story, "A Fun Family Voyage," starting on page 35. If you're more in the market for a couple's weekend, Associate Travel Editor Annette Thompson found the perfect place: Georgetown in Washington, D.C. This story names our 22 favorite stores and restaurants in the area. Having visited there many times, I always marvel at the unique goodies I find in this part of our Nation's Capital. If your spouse doesn't want to shop, just pull out a map. D.C. is full of other adventures too. Turn to page 22 to read about her discoveries.

As I close this letter I want to pose a question. What is the most unique shop in your town and why? Let me know by letter or e-mail (john_floyd@timeinc.com).

Thanks for the blessings you have bestowed on us by reading *Southern Living*.

Best Regards,


John Alex Floyd, Jr.

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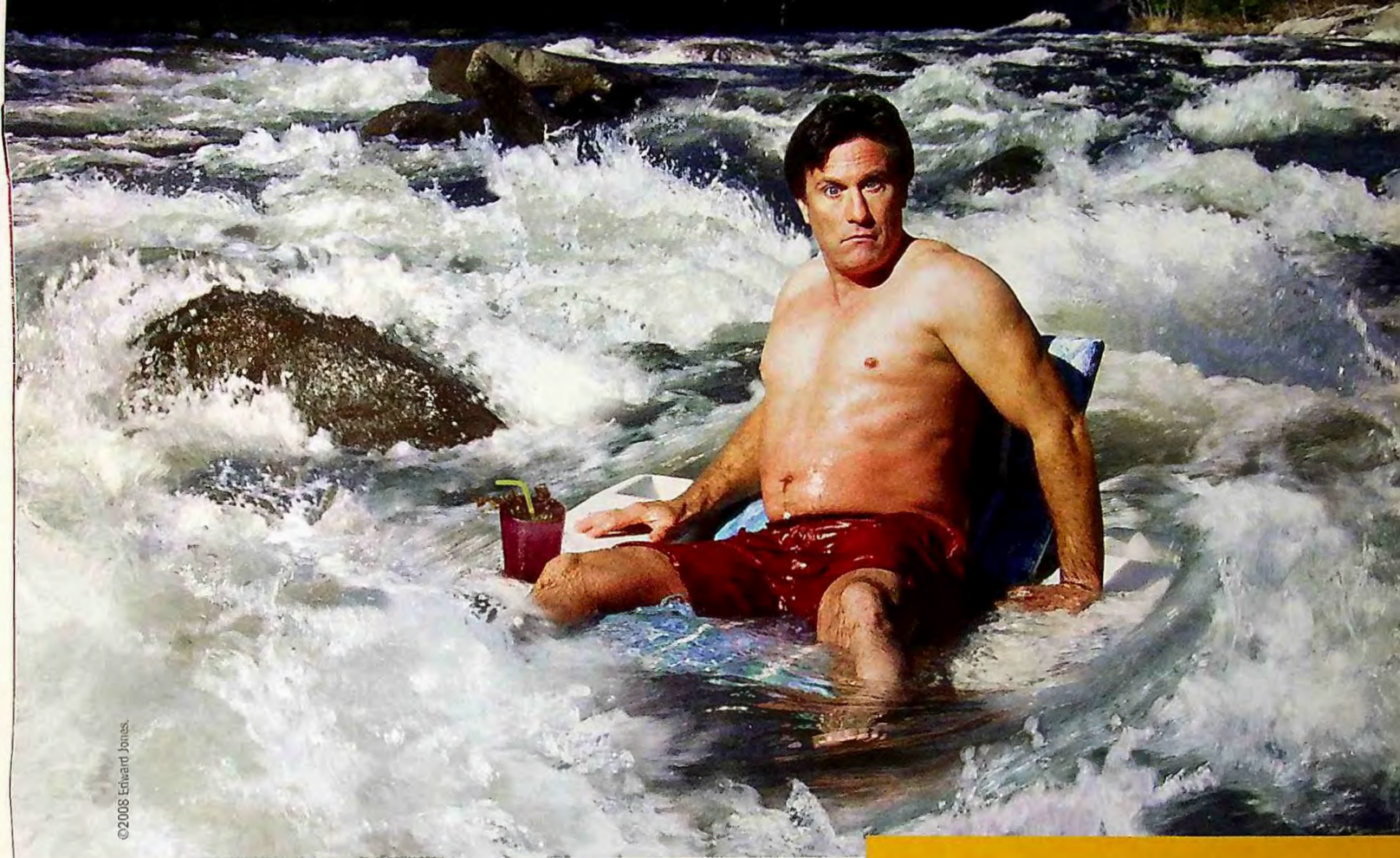
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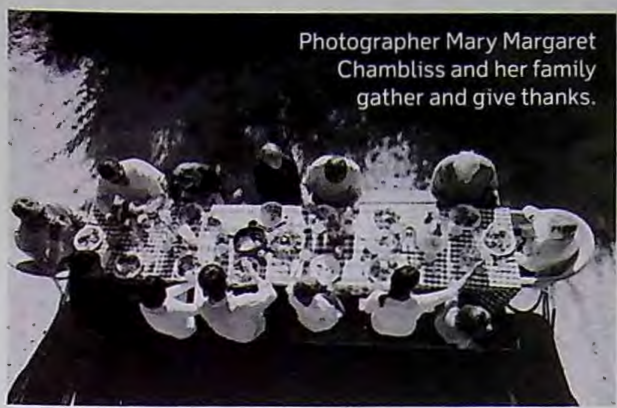


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MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

Life at Southern Living



Photographer Mary Margaret Chambliss and her family gather and give thanks.

When it comes to family gatherings, this month just might feature the best one of the year. By **Dianne Young**

Canvas our staff about their favorite holiday, and you'll find that Thanksgiving always sweeps the election. And why not? Thanksgiving is all about everything that's right with our holidays. It's the Fourth of July without the exploding firecrackers and Christmas without the pressure. All you have to do is get together with the people you love, eat great food, share a good time, and make some grand memories.

We asked around to see if anyone here had memories to share.

Last year Director of Photography Mark Sandlin and his family members played in a turkey day softball tournament. "Our Thanksgiving always involves some kind of sports competition," said Mark with a wry smile. "We're all pretty competitive. I think it's from my wife's side of the family."

Travel Photographer Mary Margaret Chambliss offered up shots from her crew's annual trip to Pawleys Island in South Carolina. All the pictures focus on the family sitting down to an informal dinner at a picnic table near the beach. She told us how her mother had initiated a tradition a few years back of getting everyone to write, anonymously, on a napkin something he or she was thankful for over the past year. "During lunch," Mary Margaret explained, "we all pick a napkin, read it aloud, and guess whose it was. When Mom first suggested this, we all 'goobed' out, but it's come to be one of the most fun things we do."

Try it. It might just be a perfect addition to your celebration.

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IN SEASON

Nuts About Pecans

Sure, you could make the ump-teenth pecan pie. But our editors have so many more ideas for this nut in our five-star recipe collection: southernliving.com/pecans.

FOOD

Something Special on the Side

Want to wow 'em at your Thanksgiving gathering? Wondering what to bring? Check out our slide show of simply spectacular side dishes: southernliving.com/thanksgivingsides.

HOME

Set the Table

We'll show you easy ways to arrange your centerpiece and more, whether it's for the big feast or a weeknight dinner: southernliving.com/falltable.



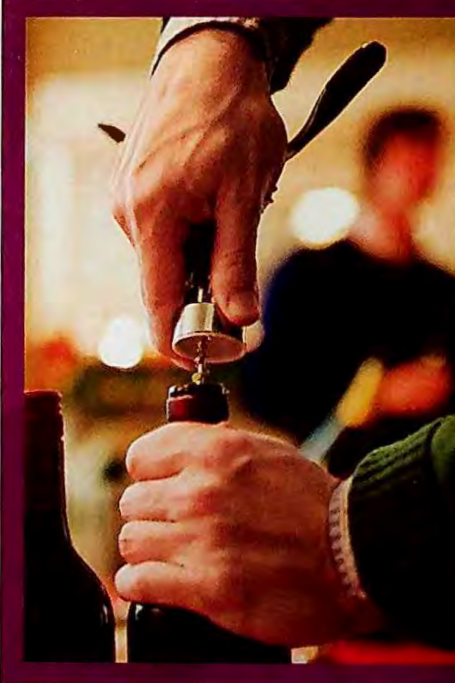
THE SOUTH

Our Pick of Presents

Associate Travel Editor Jennifer Mckenzie Frazier put more than 100 Southern items to the test for the Ultimate *Southern Living* Gift Guide. Find out what made the cut, and then pick your favorites for your own family and friends: southernliving.com/giftguide.

THE SOUTH Help With Hurricane Relief

With thousands of residents displaced by Hurricane Ike in September, you can still assist those in need. Visit our special page to learn where you can send supplies and volunteer in continuing efforts to bring back the Texas coast and other hard-hit areas in the region: southernliving.com/hurricanerelief.



OUR BLOGS

Homecoming, N'awlins Style

Executive Editor Scott Jones offers his expert guidance on the right wines for a New Orleans homecoming holiday feast in his blog, *Eating My Words*. Plus he'll have more tips and advice for home cooks planning big get-togethers: southernliving.com/eatingmywords.

OUR SITES

Spoil Your Houseguests

Company's coming, but is your house ready? Myhomeideas.com has tips for getting your guest room ready, plus ideas on effortless entertaining. Make your full house a fun house this season: myhomeideas.com/holiday.

Get Inspired

GREAT IDEAS TO ENJOY THE GOOD LIFE

• TO RAISE •

A Classy Glass

HOST A CELEBRATION OF HISTORIC PROPORTIONS.

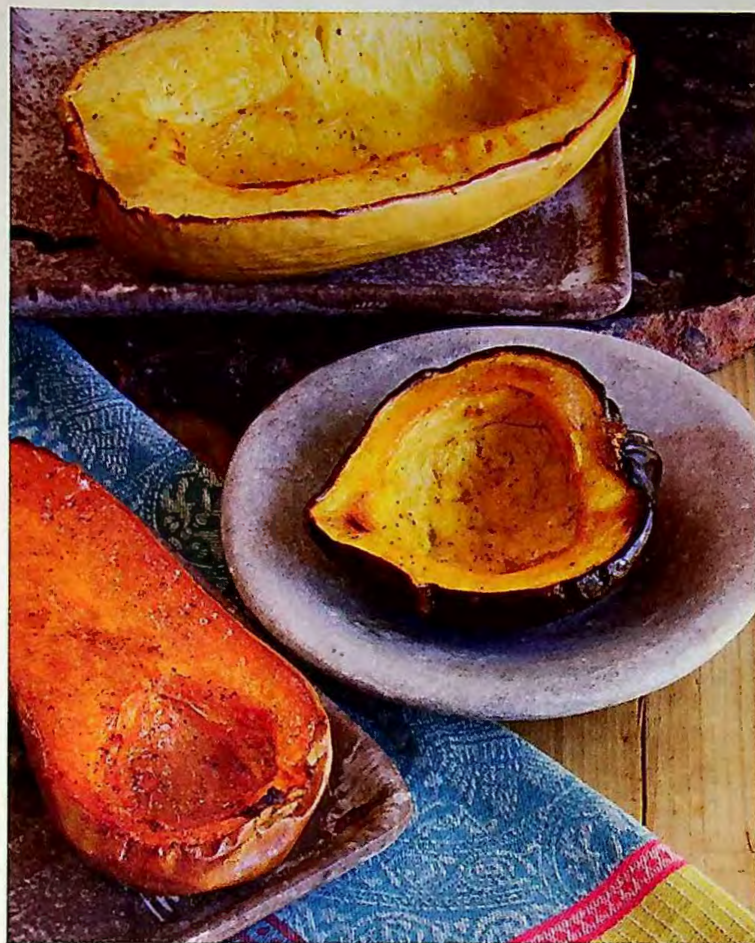
This season, serve your holiday libations in Jefferson cups, stylish drinkware designed almost two centuries ago by Thomas Jefferson himself. A Jefferson cup can also be an elegant desk accessory; its curved bottom makes it a perfect container for paper clips. A sterling silver version will set you back hundreds of George Washingtons, but you can find a good-looking pewter cup for less than \$25. If you don't spot them at your local home store or jeweler, visit the online shop at www.monticello.org.



PHOTOGRAPH: ROBBIE CAPONETTO / STYLING: BUFFY HARGETT

• TO TASTE •

Winter Squash



ROASTED WINTER SQUASH

Preheat oven to 400°. Cut 1 (2- to 3-lb.) butternut squash, 1 (2- to 3-lb.) spaghetti squash, and 1 (1- to 2-lb.) acorn squash in half lengthwise, and remove seeds. Place squash, cut sides up, on an aluminum foil-lined baking sheet. Microwave $\frac{1}{4}$ cup butter and 2 Tbsp. honey at HIGH 1 minute or until melted; stir until blended. Brush cut sides of squash with butter mixture. Sprinkle with 1 tsp. salt and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. pepper. Bake, uncovered, 1 hour or until tender; let stand 10 minutes. Cut into large pieces and serve. Makes 6 to 8 servings. Prep: 15 min. Bake: 1 hr., Stand: 10 min.

Roasted Acorn Squash: Omit butternut and spaghetti squash. Cut acorn squash in half; remove and discard seeds. Cut squash into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch slices. Proceed with recipe as directed, decreasing bake time to 45 minutes or until tender. Garnish with sage sprigs, if desired. Makes 4 servings. Prep: 10 min., Bake: 45 min.



• TO MAKE •

Instant Showstopper

Don't just think indoors when it comes to decorating. You can show a sense of style outside as well. One of our resident garden gurus showed us how to make this arrangement. First he placed florist foam in the center of an old hanging basket. Then he simply pressed clippings of aucuba and berries from nandina and privet into the foam. For a finishing touch, he spray-painted dogwood branches a bright red and used them to add a little drama and height.

• TO COLLECT •

CAPITAL KEEPSAKES

Honor America's ultimate home by trimming your tree with the 2008 White House Christmas ornament. The design commemorates 23rd President Benjamin Harrison and the first documented tree to decorate the White House. The cost is only \$16.95.

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It's easy to break the mold when you're the one who created it.



Introducing the new 2009 BMW 3 Series. It's one thing to create a car. It's quite another to create a category. And that's exactly what the original 3 Series did with the first sports sedan. Today the car continues to define the segment with a remarkable redesign. The front has undergone a stunning transformation highlighted by razor-sharp lines and sweeping contours. Under the hood, the revolutionary Valvetronic system allows the engine to breathe, resulting in greater fuel efficiency. To that end, a new diesel version debuts this year. All told, the new 3 Series doesn't just break the mold. It smashes it into a million pieces.

• TO DRESS UP •

Delicious Bread

Who says you can't have fresh-tasting bread in 20 minutes flat? Wow the whole family with "Mom's secret recipe" tonight.

EASY GARLIC ROLLS

Preheat oven to 400°. Cut 4 artisan rolls in half horizontally. Melt $\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter in a small saucepan over medium-low heat. Add 2 minced garlic cloves and $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. dried Italian seasoning, and cook, stirring constantly, 1 to 2 minutes or until fragrant. Brush butter mixture on cut sides of bread. Place bread, cut sides up, on a lightly greased baking sheet. Bake 7 to 8 minutes or until lightly toasted. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

Prep: 10 min., Cook: 2 min., Bake: 8 min.

Note: We used Chicago hard rolls from Publix. You could also use French bread rolls, a sliced French bread baguette, or any other small rolls from your grocery store.



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• TO CREATE •

Natural Look

TALK ABOUT EASY. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE sculptural form of winter trees to create an arrangement that doesn't even need water. First clip a few branches that catch your eye. (We love winged elm, but you can also try sweet gum, American beech, cottonwood, or crepe myrtle.) Then fill a clear glass vase with small apples to anchor the branches. A work of art—right from your own backyard.

• TO TRY •

Headboard Solution

A BED NEVER LOOKS FINISHED WITHOUT A HEADBOARD. But what to do if space dictates that you angle your bed into a corner? Try a screen. We had this one made to look like antique shutters and painted to match the bed linens. It's casual, contemporary, and simply neat.



• TO SERVE •

BACON-WRAPPED BRUSSELS SPROUTS

Preheat oven to 400°. Microwave 10 bacon slices, in batches, between paper towels, at HIGH for 1½ minutes. Cut slices in half crosswise. Cut 10 Brussels sprouts in half lengthwise. Wrap 1 bacon piece around each Brussels sprout half; secure with a wooden pick. Place sprouts, cut sides down, on a lightly greased wire rack on a baking sheet. Sprinkle with pepper to taste. Bake at 400° for 20 to 25 minutes or until bacon is crisp and Brussels sprouts are tender. Serve with Creamy Mustard Sauce, if desired. Makes about 6 to 8 appetizer servings. Prep: 15 min., Bake: 25 min.

Creamy Mustard Sauce: Stir together ½ cup sour cream, 2 tsp. whole grain mustard, 1 tsp. brown sugar, and salt and pepper to taste in a bowl. Makes ½ cup. Prep: 5 min.



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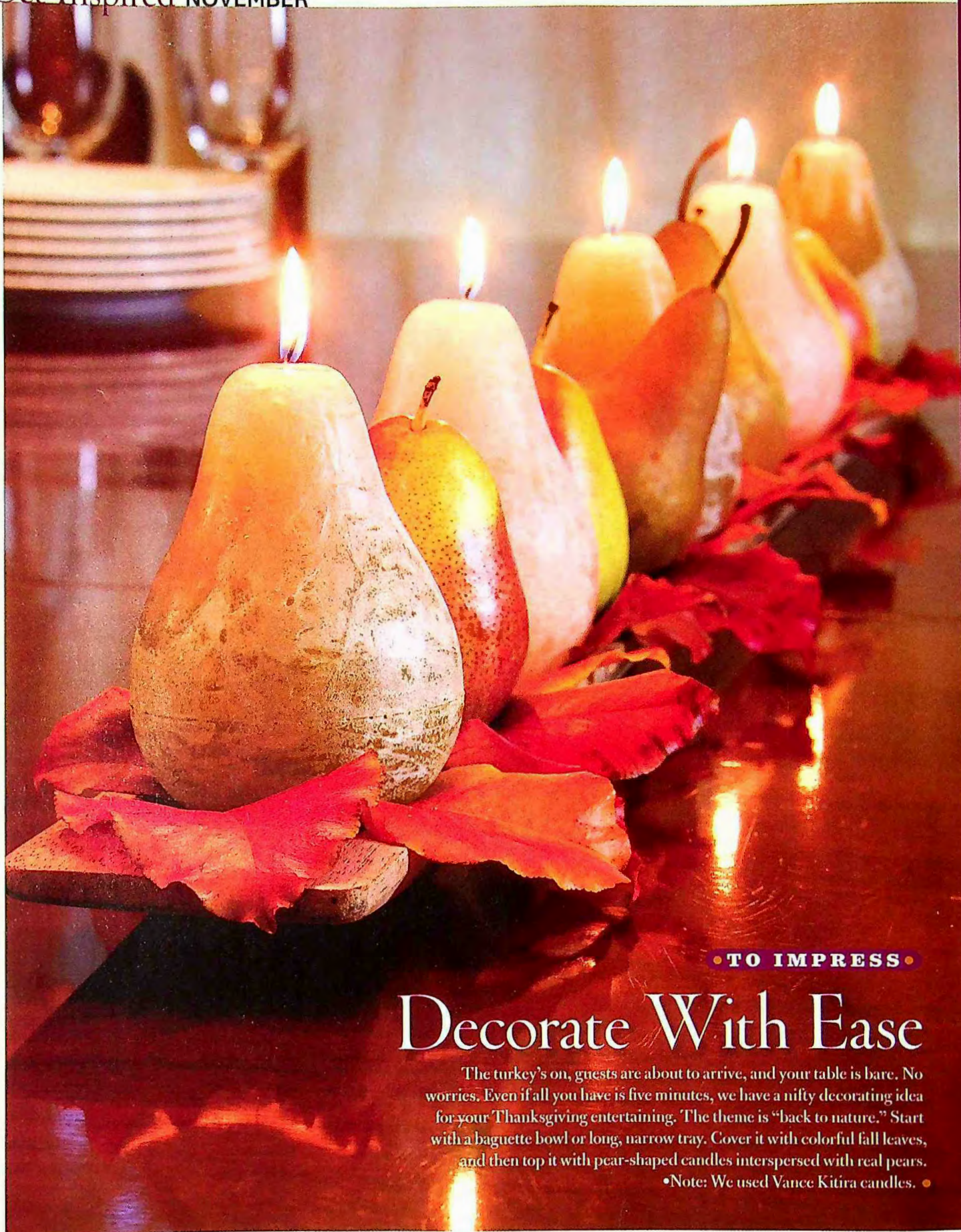


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Hardwood: Grand Canyon, Plateau Point, 8" wide plank.



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• TO IMPRESS •

Decorate With Ease

The turkey's on, guests are about to arrive, and your table is bare. No worries. Even if all you have is five minutes, we have a nifty decorating idea for your Thanksgiving entertaining. The theme is "back to nature." Start with a baguette bowl or long, narrow tray. Cover it with colorful fall leaves, and then top it with pear-shaped candles interspersed with real pears.

•Note: We used Vance Kitira candles. •



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A person wearing a green dress and multiple gold bracelets is holding several shopping bags. The bags are black, blue, orange, and green. The background shows shelves with various items in a store.

Travel

8 Fornash

22 Ways To EXPLORE Georgetown

Discover what D.C. insiders know: This neighborhood boasts a shopping experience everyone will enjoy. By **Annette Thompson**, photography **Scott Suchman**



Enjoy all areas of Washington, D.C.:
southernliving.com/washington-dc

Here's what I see as I cross the intersection of M Street and Wisconsin Avenue: a sleek woman in to-die-for jeans speaking a language I can't pin down; an iPod-toting jogger with shopping bags from a tony store; a model (or she should be) in knee-high boots and a thigh-high skirt. It's like a well-cast movie—all the elements fit like a study in big-city fashion.

Is this the South? You bet. It's Georgetown at its best, trendiest, most promising. And we're here to shop (and take you with us for the fun). Follow along with our map on page 26 as we go international with names you know and local—only the best—popping into reinvented town-homes to sample the distinctive character you only find here. Join us on a tour of my favorites. ➔ *turn to page 24*

Travel SHOPPING

TIP

Streetside parking is tough in Georgetown. You're better off using one of the dozen or so lots (\$20 for all day) or riding the DC Circulator bus (\$1) into the neighborhood, and then spending the day on foot.

(*The Shops at Georgetown Park on M Street NW.*) The brainchild of a PR executive turned handbag maven, this shop helps you choose the style, fabric, and ribbons for your own dream bag.

- While Mexican folk art entices you into **9 The Phoenix** (1514 Wisconsin Avenue NW.), it's the handbags and Eileen Fisher casual wear that hold you there.
- Wander down the stairs at Cady's Alley to a designer shop for preteen girls. **10 Twixt** (3319 Cady's Alley NW.) satisfies girls' trends while meeting moms' modesty standards.
- Discover environmentally conscious children's clothes and accessories at **11 Yiro** (3236 P Street NW.).

It's About the Bling Two shops glitter with unusual jewelry designs—one traditional, one contemporary.

- An elegant M Street brownstone shows off snazzy gold jewelry with a patriotic and historical theme. Meet the eponymous jeweler at **12 Ann Hand** (2900 M Street NW.). Ann's original creations include an 18k gold pin, featuring an eagle resting on a genuine South Sea pearl, that's worn by First Ladies, Congresswomen, and diplomats.
- The icy-white showroom of **13 Jewelers' Werk Galerie** (3319 Cady's Alley NW.) illustrates the talents of international jewelry artists and designers. A centerpiece cabinet holds drawers filled with unique necklaces, bracelets, and brooches crafted in unexpected materials.

Designing Your Interiors

Antiques and accessories shops populate the upper sections of Wisconsin Avenue, while home-decor marketplaces cluster around Cady's Alley.

- It's always the 1950s in **14 Sixteen Fifty Nine** (1659 Wisconsin Avenue NW.). This midcentury modern furniture, lighting, and art showroom puts the cool back in Paul McCobb club chairs and snapshots of World War II America. ➔ turn to page 26



5 Fresh



14 Sixteen Fifty Nine



12 Ann Hand

Fashion-Forward Thinking

The clothiers of Georgetown dress Presidential daughters, inaugural ball goddesses, pumps-wearing nine-to-fivers, and visitors to boot. Amid the better-known shops (look for Zara, Kate Spade, Diesel, and Lacoste), clothes junkies discover dozens of newcomers with frocks as unique as each shop's personality.

- Originality reigns at **1 Annie Creamcheese**, a vintage emporium featuring racks with designer dresses from the 1940s to the present (3279 M Street NW.). Amid the Janis Joplin and Jimi Hendrix posters, you may see the famous Olsen twins snagging their sought-after style.
- Follow the fashionistas who flock to these tiny upscale boutiques aimed at young professionals: **2 Urban Chic** (1626 Wisconsin Avenue NW.); **3 Sugar** (1633 Wisconsin Avenue NW.); **4 Wink** (3109 M Street NW.); and **5 Fresh** (1205 Potomac Street NW.).
- Two noteworthy high-end stores cater to twenty- and thirtysomething, affluent women: **6 CUSP** by Neiman Marcus (3030 M Street NW.) and **7 Barneys CO-OP** (3040 M Street NW.).
- Bag a one-of-a-kind purse at **8 Fornash**

11 out of 14

commuters on the Hudson

say

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22 Hook



13 Jewelers' Werk Galerie



19 Martin's Tavern

- Walk through the red lacquer door to **15 Carling Nichols** (1675 Wisconsin Avenue NW.) for a serene selection of 18th- and 19th-century Chinese antiques. Their red wedding baskets make striking focal points.
- The gallery **16 Appalachian Spring** (1415 Wisconsin Avenue NW.) features the crafts of American artists, including hand-turned wooden bowls, pottery, fabric art, blown-glass vases, and even kaleidoscopes.
- The contemporary, clean lines of the fixtures in **17 Boffi Studio DC** (3320 M Street NW.) conjure calm hours luxuriating in home spas.

Only in D.C. With so many spots named for George Washington, it's easy to forget the other George. Georgetown was formally established in 1751 and honored the British King George II with its name. Tobacco grew in the surrounding fields when the district incorporated the neighborhood and its university in 1871.

- Brown tobacco leaves hang from the rafters of **18 Georgetown Tobacco** (3144 M Street NW.), harkening to the past. We shop here for the Venetian carnival masks. This month, select an elephant or a donkey to don for an election celebration. •

A Tale of Four Eateries

- **19 Martin's Tavern:** This is where J.F.K. proposed to Jackie. An institution since the 1930s, the pub serves traditional fare (1264 Wisconsin Avenue NW.). A favorite of Washington's political elite, it's served every elected Presidential candidate since Harry Truman. Where else in the district can you tuck in an all-American buffalo burger or a comforting Welsh rarebit? Dine here soon, and you may rub elbows with our next Commander-in-Chief.
- **20 ching ching CHA:** Silly name, serious Zen. Escape the bustle at this Chinese teahouse (1063 Wisconsin Avenue NW.). Take off your shoes, cozy onto a soft cushion, listen to the understated music, and be serene. Start with a cup of Dragon Well Tea (\$8) and Mongolian dumplings rich with lamb (\$5). The ambience soothes your woes as fast as an orange blossom opens in a teacup.
- **21 Patisserie Poupon:** Climb the stairs off Wisconsin into the little French bakery that looks as if it were lifted out of the Left Bank (1645 Wisconsin Avenue NW.). Cases of baked goods clamor for your attention, while aromas of sugar and pastries entice. Don't pass up the almond croissants or the daily quiche. *C'est magnifique!*
- **22 Hook:** This restaurant has caught a very smart trend: sustainability (3241 M Street NW.). The menu changes daily to promote only fresh and available seafood. Match that with considerable culinary talents for one of the best meals in town that you can feel good about.

•GEORGETOWN





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Starlight at the Lodge

Spectacular views and pueblo-style accommodations make for a great stay in Texas. By **Karen Lingo**

Fet propped up on the patio wall outside my room at Indian Lodge, I thank my lucky stars (and the zillion or so twinkling overhead) for West Texas and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC).

In the 1930s, workers in the CCC built a 15-room lodge with 18-inch-thick adobe walls on a hillside in the Davis Mountains. They even fashioned some of the furniture, sturdy pieces of cedar that fit the rugged desert setting. The park service added 24 rooms, as well as a dining facility and a pool, in the 1960s. *Turn to page 31*



ABOVE: Indian Lodge resembles a pueblo dwelling tucked into the foothills.

BELOW, FAR LEFT: Rooms in the older section of the lodge offer the best views.

BELOW, LEFT: An observation area in Davis Mountains State Park showcases the austere beauty of the high desert.





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Holiday Gift Guide



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LEFT: Hikers need long pants, jackets, and boots to explore the rugged landscape. **RIGHT:** Exposed pine beams and handmade cedar furniture warm the interior of the lodge.

A recent renovation upgraded the lodge's plumbing, heating, and air-conditioning systems. Original pine ceilings and floors were restored, and rooms were outfitted with new draperies, lamps, and linens. The rustic charm, however, remains intact.

Big Country Indian Lodge isn't exactly on the beaten path. But the spare, hardscrabble beauty of this area just north of Big Bend National Park makes it worth the effort to get here.

By midafternoon I'd dropped off I-10 midway between Fort Stockton and Van Horn and wound through the mountains toward Fort Davis. The sleepy town claims Fort Davis National Historic Site, nearby McDonald Observatory, and Davis Mountains State Park, which cradles Indian Lodge.

Starry Night After climbing to an observation area in Davis Mountains State Park for a panoramic view of the countryside, I drove on and checked in to the lodge. The temperature, warm enough for shirtsleeves during the day, began dropping with the sun.

Now, content after a dinner of chicken-fried steak in the lodge's Black Bear Restaurant, I watch as stars fill the vast night stage. ●

Indian Lodge: www.tpwd.state.tx.us or (432) 426-3254.

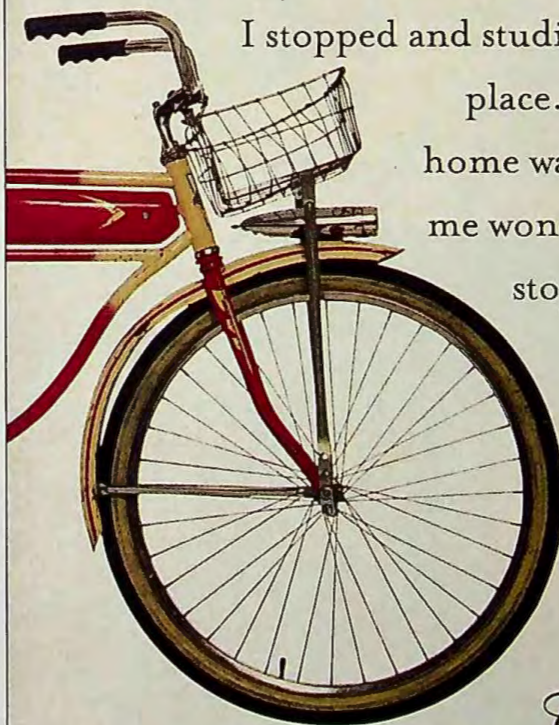
Shine On

Don't miss the star parties at McDonald Observatory on Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday nights. Tours are offered daily; www.mcdonaldobservatory.org or 1-877-984-7827.



One morning I was riding my bike around downtown Charleston, admiring the homes.

I stopped and studied one particular place. The detail in the home was unreal. It made me wonder. When did we stop building homes so beautiful that people would preserve them forever?



Charleston CVB.com

Cabana

Nashville eats heartily, celebrating Southern flavors and thinking of others in this season of giving. By **Carolanne Griffith Roberts**

Simple food, simple thinking. Chef Brian Uhl looks at the small mound of fragrant vegetables on the plate at Cabana and pronounces them “squash casserole.” No highfalutin title, no gussied-up nonsense from this classically trained chef.

Grilled trout arrives embellished with a smooth crab-corn ragoût. Grilled venison, with a coffee-cocoa rub and no gamy tinges, is complemented by a sweet potato-heirloom apple risotto. Here’s our favorite: Tennessee Sliders, sweet potato biscuits with ham from Benton’s (a Tennessee

treasure featured by many top chefs) and house-made peach preserves. Before 10 p.m., this place concentrates on dinner; then it turns hip and clubby. Sit at traditional tables or cocoon in private, curtained cabanas that seat up to 12 and include MP3 hookups and flat-panel TVs. Just don’t forget to eat. “It’s casual Southern comfort food,” says Brian. Put the emphasis on the word “comfort” and you’ll be giving thanks. *1910 Belcourt Avenue; www.cabananashville.com or (615) 577-2262. Opens at 4 p.m. Entrées start at \$10.95. •*

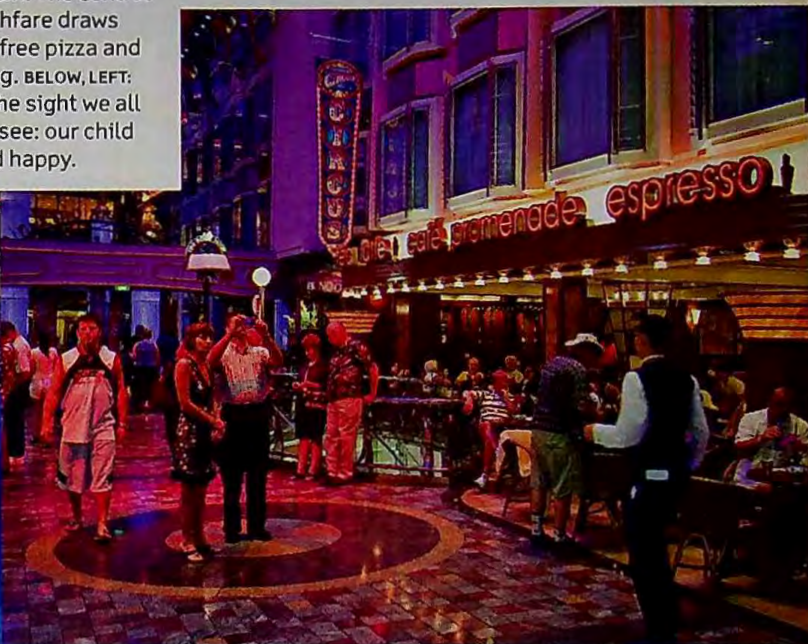
Giving Back

Cabana co-owner Randy Rayburn donates 1% of his annual profit to America’s Second Harvest and other community efforts. “The blessings come back to me many times over,” says Randy.



PHOTOGRAPH: ROBBIE CAPONETTO

LEFT: Royal Caribbean's surf simulator is available on some ships, including the new *Independence of the Seas*. RIGHT: The central thoroughfare draws kids for free pizza and shopping. BELOW, LEFT: Here's the sight we all want to see: our child safe and happy.



Our ship hadn't quite left port when I handed my teenager a present: a lovely leather-bound notebook with lined pages and a variety of colorful pens. His mission was to keep a cruise journal, a tell-all, remember-the-moments account of his days (and nights) on the high seas.

Duh. If you were a kid on a cruise, would you write? Dream on. He was too busy, totally booked. We always teach him to set goals and he does. His cruise goals included the rock wall, miniature golf, teen-only nightclub, video arcade, fast-food joints, pools, hot tubs, basketball court, pizza 24-7, jogging track, "mocktail" bar, scratch deejay lessons, boogie boarding, Wii tennis, battle of the sexes contest, hip-hop, crowning of a prom king and queen, foosball tourney, disco night—and freedom.

Our guy checked most of it off his list. And he'll second what we fast found out: Taking a teen on a cruise is a good idea. Pick a three- to four-day sail

in the Caribbean for the best results. He's a free agent in a safe environment, and I can give my over-active mama radar a rest and enjoy some worry-free fun on our amazing Royal Caribbean International liner. We'll do it again. Here are a few memories along the way (somebody had to use that journal).

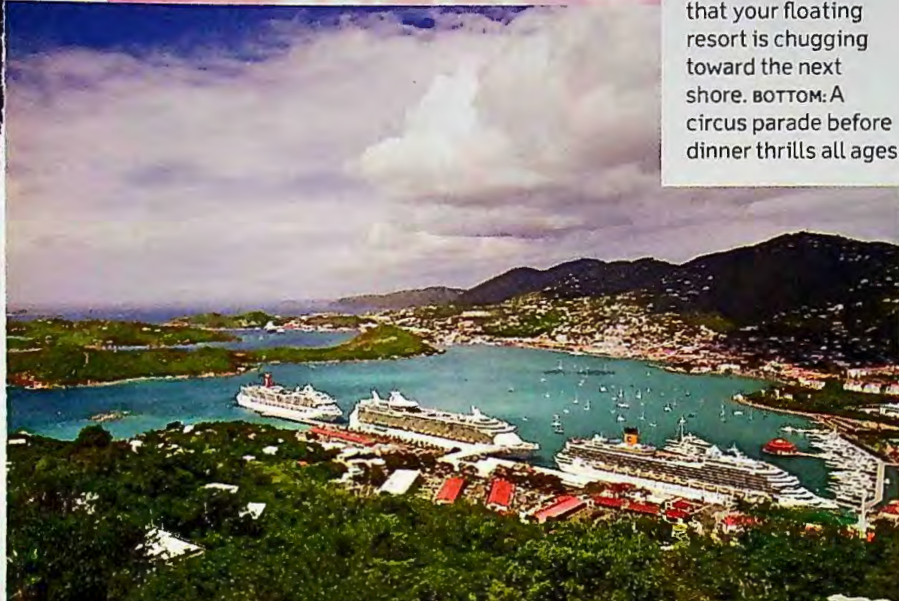
- Together time. Smile for the camera as we board. Report to muster stations for the lifeboat drill. And he's off. We find a lovely spot for departure; he hits orientation at Fuel, the club for Generation Facebook. We hear later that there are more than 1,000 kids on board.
- Dinner, late seating. He finds us, dressed appropriately (love it). Dessert comes and goes, so does he. Something about dancing, music, a party, and a new friend from Brazil. We stroll the deck, catch a show. Romantic.
- Shore excursion, St. Maarten. We're suddenly desirable (maybe it's our plans to sail in a race featuring former America's Cup yachts, a pay-extra adventure our kid cites as a "major memory

A Fun Family Voyage

Not a grump nor grumble onboard—my son's too busy with friends, activities, shore excursions, and even time with us. By **Carolanne Griffith Roberts**



LEFT: Ice-skating on a cruise (on many Royal Caribbean vessels) is pure chill out time. BELOW: The gentle motion of the ship reminds you that your floating resort is chugging toward the next shore. BOTTOM: A circus parade before dinner thrills all ages.



moment"). Back onboard: He heads for pizza, but shows up with friends for the seventies night, an everyone event where his parents embarrass him by dancing the way we used to (Y-M-C-Aaaaay!).

- We elders anchor the mornings—elliptical trainers facing the fast-moving waves, coffee with a view, and finish-a-sentence chats. He rules the evenings—we'll never know if he entered the dating game (some things you don't share).
- We use our iPhones (with the AT&T at Sea feature) to touch base.
- We meet up for the early evening ice show, a cross between Cirque du Soleil and Ice Capades, and earn a nod of approval. It's cool—take a sweater.
- Strangely enough—and I hope this happens to you—we saw him more by day three. Maybe he suspected we knew something that he didn't (we did—a specialty steak restaurant onboard; a night-club show he protested but enjoyed; taxi rides around islands such as St. Thomas; new friends with a cute daughter his age; and so on).

From a parenting point of view, we seldom needed to direct traffic, correct attitude, or be intense during our days at sea. We were too busy enjoying our son.

The teen who got off that ship was the same one who got on—but calmer, more worldly, engaging, and in need of a week's worth of sleep. Back home, we overheard him recounting the tales (sometimes embellished) to landlubber buddies. Our teen, king of the waves. Thinking his parents are momentarily cool for taking him. Wow. We're on to something. ●

WEEKEND (OR WEEKEND-PLUS) SAILS

ROYAL CARIBBEAN INTERNATIONAL

Southern Ports: Fort Lauderdale, Port Canaveral, Miami, and Tampa, Florida; Baltimore.

Destinations: The Bahamas and western Caribbean. **For Your Teen:** Teen Center (10:30 p.m.-2 a.m.), theme nights, rock wall, FlowRider surf simulator (some ships), Scratch DJ Academy, ice-skating (some ships), airbrush tattoos. **Rates:** from \$229 for three nights, \$249 for four nights; www.royalcaribbean.com.

CARNIVAL CRUISE LINES

Southern Ports: Mobile, Alabama; Fort Lauderdale, Jacksonville, Miami, Port Canaveral, and Tampa, Florida; New Orleans; Charleston, South Carolina; Galveston, Texas.

Destinations: The Bahamas and eastern and western Caribbean. **For Your Teen:** games and a video arcade (offerings vary by ship), Club O2 for older teens, teen dance floor, teen-only shore excursions, themed parties. **Rates:** from \$229 for three nights, \$209 for four nights; www.carnival.com.

DISNEY CRUISE LINE

Southern Ports: Port Canaveral. **Destinations:** The Bahamas. **For Your Teen:** Ocean Quest (ages 10-14) area with video games and a to scale replica of the ship's bridge; Aloft (*Disney Wonder*) and The Stack (*Disney Magic*) for older teens with TVs, a lounge area, and Internet cafe; Studio Sea family club; themed parties; activities ranging from animation classes to PlayStation2 competitions. **Rates:** from \$429 for three nights, \$499 for four nights; <http://disneycruise.disney.go.com>.

CELEBRITY CRUISES

Southern Ports: Fort Lauderdale and Miami. **Destinations:** The Bahamas and western Caribbean.

For Your Teen: XClub program with games, karaoke, and more; Fun Factory, themed parties, talent shows, pizza party. **Rates:** from \$199 for two nights, \$349 for four nights; www.celebritycruises.com.

NORWEGIAN CRUISE LINE

Southern Port: Miami. **Destinations:** The Bahamas. **For Your Teen:** Teen's Crew program, themed parties, group dining, teen disco, other activities. **Rates:** from \$199 for two nights, \$209 for three nights; www.ncl.com. —Lauren Simpson



Introducing Oreo Fudge Rings. A crispy, thin
Oreo cookie ring, drizzled with white fudge.

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RIGHT: The artist is at home in his workspace at Centenary College of Louisiana.

BELOW: Fertitta has trademarked the term "Muffy" for their famous deli sandwiches.

William Joyce's Guide To Shreveport

He's big in the world of animated films and remains loyal to his North Louisiana hometown. By **Taylor Bruce**

It's my favorite thing when people come," William Joyce says, amid multihued, lively descriptions of his riverside home city. The delightful mom-and-pop gaiety betrays his life's work as an animator and writer, the creative fount for hit movies such as *Robots*, *Meet the Robinsons*, and upcoming projects with Twentieth Century FOX and DreamWorks. But, even after great success, the prized storyteller has never permanently relocated to California. Instead William invites Hollywood here, escorting Tinseltown pals to his preferred steak house, Cajun kitchen, and red leather barstool, places where the proud native son does linguistic cartwheels over Louisiana's third-largest city. "The accents and the attitudes are so literary," he says. "Like everybody just crawled out of a Tennessee Williams TV set."

William is the village dreamer, a man who cherishes Shreveport as his idea incubator, who goes nowhere without his steel nib sketching pen, and who relishes the chance to shepherd visitors on a quintessential town tour de force. Take him at his word(s). Here's how.



FERTITTA'S DELICATESSEN & CATERING

The Local: "A perfect time warp, inside and outside, except now it's air-conditioned. Order a muffuletta. The side order of nostalgia is free."

Our Take: Inventor of the "Muffy," this redbrick, corner deli in the Blue Goose District was also the city's first imported foods store. Take home 16 ounces of Papa's Olive Mix (\$7).

Go: Weekday lunch

Info: 1124 Fairfield Avenue; www.papa-fertitta.com or (318) 424-5508

CUSH'S GROCERY & MARKET

The Local: "Calling this a grocery store is like calling Louis Vuitton a place to get a suitcase. The small, bright, wood-frame building evokes the idea of an old-fashioned neighborhood market."

Our Take: Because William's butcher paper doodles hang on the 12-table cafe's walls, it's the most superb, though unofficial, museum meal in the state. Finish off the avocado-and-shrimp salad with a cupcake.

Go: Weekday at lunch, earlier than later

Info: 9535 Ellerbe Road; www.cushs-grocery.com or (318) 795-9006

VILLAGE GRILLE

The Local: "The single coolest place in Shreveport. It's got that dark, no-windows, Sinatra thing down. A timeless pleasure of ring-a-ding charm."

Our Take: The candlelit steak house, which creates a hideout vibe just beyond downtown proper, encourages good conversations. The thick Chicago Prime steaks encourage regulars.

Go: Business dinner, midweek

Info: 1313 Louisiana Avenue; (318) 424-2874

HERBYK'S

The Local: "Tiny, tiny little dive. Classic and eccentric. The lady that runs it is the sweetest thing. Honey-dripping Southern accent."

Our Take: Much in the neighborhood dried up, but the home of the famous Shrimp Buster, an open-faced po'boy topped with flattened fried shrimp and a secret red sauce, still brings in crowds.

Go: Family lunch outing on Saturday
Info: 1833 Pierre Avenue; www.herbyks.net or (318) 424-2724 •

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Life's Better on IAMS

UPDATE: Atlanta's Hotel Scene

We give you the lowdown on your new overnight options. By **Jennifer V. Cole, Annette Thompson**

WHAT'S THE VIBE?

WHY STAY HERE?

WOULD THIS BOTHER YOU?

The Ellis Hotel
DOWNTOWN
176 Peachtree Street NW.;
www.ellishotel.com or
1-866-841-822 or
(404) 523-5155.
Rooms start at \$154.



A historic 1913 landmark hotel recast as a sleek downtown boutique property, thanks to a \$28-million restoration project, with all the business traveler trimmings.

Location, location, location—it's within minutes of the CNN Center, Georgia Aquarium, and Centennial Olympic Park; a key-access all-women's floor provides an added level of security for female travelers, with room amenities such as Spanx and hair-straightening irons.

Guest rooms are small compared to other hotels in the area, and some provide limited natural light; poor insulation means you hear house-keeping and room service staff making their rounds.



Avant-garde all-suite condo hotel appropriate for long-term stays; mirrors the feel of urban living.

TWELVE

Hotel & Residences Centennial Park
DOWNTOWN

400 West Peachtree Street; www.twelvehotels.com or (404) 418-1212. Rooms start at \$189.

Some of the most spacious accommodations in the city (rooms average 700 square feet) include full kitchens and floor-to-ceiling windows that open onto private balconies; the outdoor swimming pool and sprawling deck are a great place to beat the heat and offer killer downtown views.

Lots of systems are automated: in-room computer terminals to order room service or request housekeeping, a check-in kiosk in the lobby—if everything is working, it's a breeze, but if it's not, we found it difficult to connect with a live person.



The Mansion on Peachtree
A Rosewood Hotel & Residence
BUCKHEAD

3376 Peachtree Road; www.mansiononpeachtree.com or (404) 995-7500.
Rooms start at \$495.

Traditional elegance punctuated by first-rate service in a newly erected Neoclassical tower.

White-glove luxury—personal butler service, five-fixture baths, Egyptian cotton linens—in a techno wonderland; a new 29 Spa by Lydia Mondavi pampers in high style.

Being treated like royalty comes with a price tag; they provide chauffeur service anywhere within 2 miles and to Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. It's difficult to walk to nearby attractions such as Lenox mall right across the street—ask for help to find nearby sidewalks or crosswalks.

Four Seasons Hotel Atlanta
MIDTOWN
75 14th Street NE.;
www.fourseasons.com
or (404) 881-9898.
Rooms start at \$410.



Recognized during the past decade as the best hotel in town—oozing understated refinement in a business atmosphere—it recently updated all guest rooms.

So much to do: from the indoor Olympic-size salt-water pool and a luxe spa and health club to lunches at Park 75 restaurant and ultimate indulgences at the seasonal chocolate buffet in the lounge on weekends.

The business vibe feels a bit stiff in the lobby, which you walk by to access the spa and health club; not all of the 244 guest rooms have five fixtures in the bathrooms.



W Atlanta—Midtown
MIDTOWN
188 14th Street NE.; www.whothe.com or (404) 892-6000. Rooms start at \$249.

An ultra-modern hideout where the jet set and urban hipsters play the "see-and-be-seen" game with panache.

From dining to unwinding, W does it stylishly and playfully: the hotel houses the South's first outpost of Jean-Georges Vongerichten's Spice Market restaurant; guests lather up with Bliss bath products in their room and get a rub down at the downstairs Bliss Spa.

The glam factor means non-hotel guests traipse through the lobby to Whiskey Park and Living Room (the hotel's bars) late into the night; only the best Atlanta navigators can manage to pull into the hotel without making a U-turn across traffic. ●



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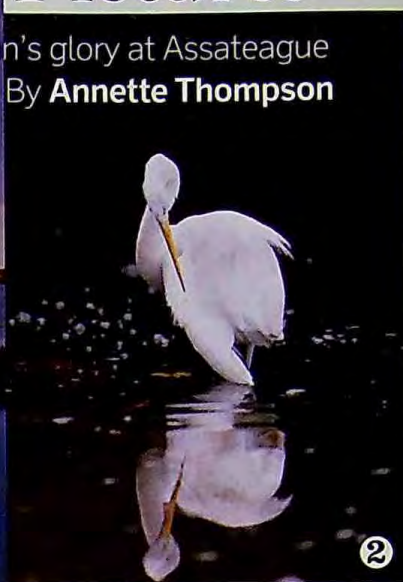
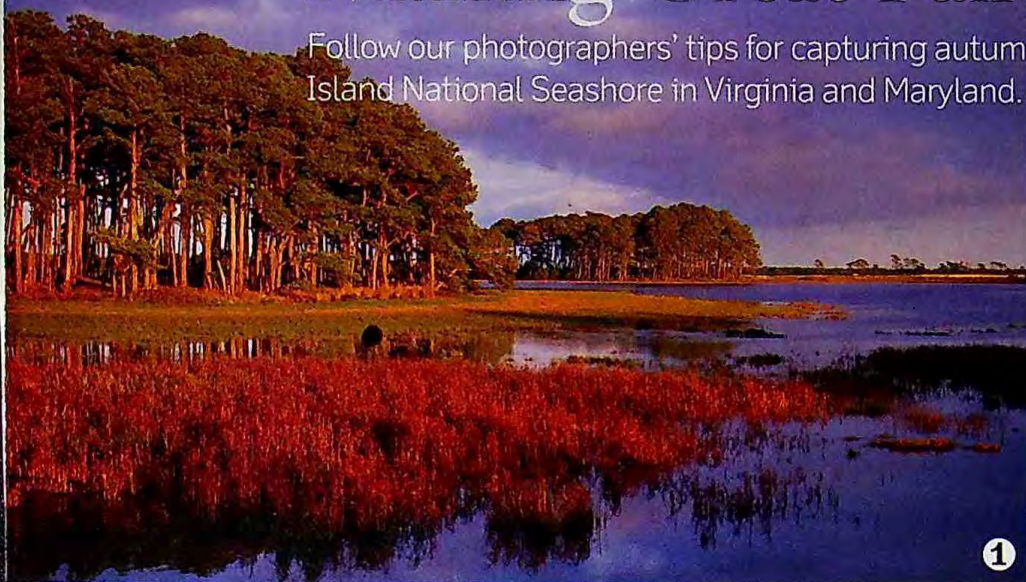
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Making Great Fall Pictures

Follow our photographers' tips for capturing autumn's glory at Assateague Island National Seashore in Virginia and Maryland. By **Annette Thompson**



1. "Use the Rule of Thirds," suggests Director of Photography Mark Sandlin. This guide helps you appreciate the three equal parts of this image: the sky, the sun, and the Earth. "Keep the line of the horizon away from the middle of the frame," he adds. Mark also recommends checking the sunrise or sunset reflection on the water. It may be as appealing as the sky.

2. Make the most of your camera's equipment, especially the magnifying lens. "Long telephoto lenses can create portraits of animals," says Senior Photographer Art Meripol. "With a medium-length lens typical to most cameras, take pictures of animals in their environment." Mark adds, "The birds and animals at Assateague are so used to people that they don't often become scared. Move slowly toward them. You might obtain a close-up without a telephoto lens."

3. Assateague is one of the most beautiful places for fall color in America," says Art. "Simply get out of your car, and plant yourself in a scenic spot. The birds will take flight at first and then circle back to settle down. Be patient." He also suggests that you turn off the automatic flash, which prevents the camera from exposing dramatic outdoor shots properly.

4. Plan your time of day wisely. Shoot during sunrise and sunset hours for golden light. "The golden hour occurs when light comes in horizontally. It lengthens shadows, which adds drama," says Mark. "Predawn or dusk light has a nice warmth that creates a sense of romance and invitation," adds Art.

Tip: Don't cancel your photo trip when the weather turns bad. "If it's misty and rainy, you can take mood shots. Plus, the fall color has more depth and saturation when it's cloudy," says Art. "Clouds accentuate color and texture," agrees Mark. "When the sky stays gray, move the frame down and emphasize some other place." ●

Assateague Island National Seashore: www.nps.gov/asis.

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from the resort.



*\$74 per person, per night, based on double occupancy includes overnight lodging, full breakfast buffet in the Rotunda, and two all day lift tickets to Winterplace. Children stay and eat free when sharing a room with adults.

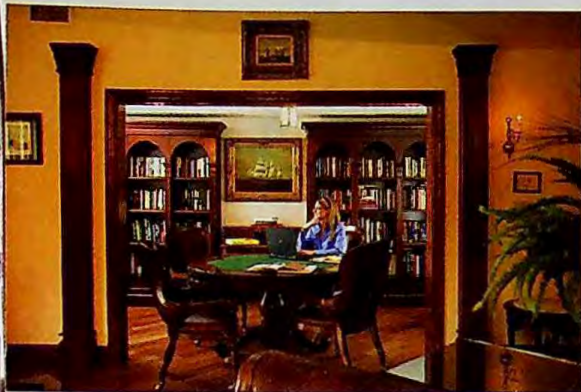


THE RESORT AT
GLADE SPRINGS

West Virginia
Wild and Wonderful

Williamsburg's European Stay

Everywhere else in this city, they honor America's early days. Here the emphasis turns abroad. By **Tanner C. Latham**



ABOVE: The basic brick exterior suggests the idea that this is just a modest country hotel. The focus is on the interior. **FAR LEFT:** The library exudes a feeling of formality and features books in several different languages. **LEFT:** Owner Patrick Duffeler and his wife, Francoise, create a European inn experience in the place Americans celebrate the birth of their country.

Wedmore Place in Williamsburg, Virginia, sneaks up on you. The modest approach, prefaced by a road winding through a forest, pastureland, and vineyards, betrays nothing of the richly decorated rooms inside.

"It was designed to provide people with a unique experience," says owner Patrick Duffeler. "One time I had a wonderful glass of wine in Tuscany, so I bought six bottles. But it wasn't the same as when I was drinking it there. The place where you are—the environment—determines everything."

Creating the Environment

For inspiration, Patrick drew on his own European lineage (born in Belgium, he emigrated to the U.S. at age 16) as well as his

travels throughout that continent. He spent five years scouring Italy, Spain, Romania, Hungary, Germany, England, and France for the perfect pieces. (**Editor's tip:** Check out the large stone fountain from Provence trickling in the cobblestone courtyard.)

Old-World Ambience, New-World Amenities

A hallway stroll becomes a walk on a map. Each of the 28 rooms is named for and features decor from a specific area of Europe. The knotty Austrian cypress floors further lighten

the Vienna room's white walls and gold-framed paintings, for example. We recommend Bohemia and Provence for their cheerful colors and simple yet sophisticated antiques. **Editor's tip:** When making reservations, inquire about your room's location. Those on the second floor have higher ceilings and exposed beams, in the Tudor style, while main-floor ceilings are trimmed out with moldings.

Did we mention that the armoire with the intricate details hides a flat-screen TV? The pieces are just as functional as they are gorgeous, and the rooms live large, with each sporting a king-size bed; a modern bathroom; and a wood-burning fireplace.

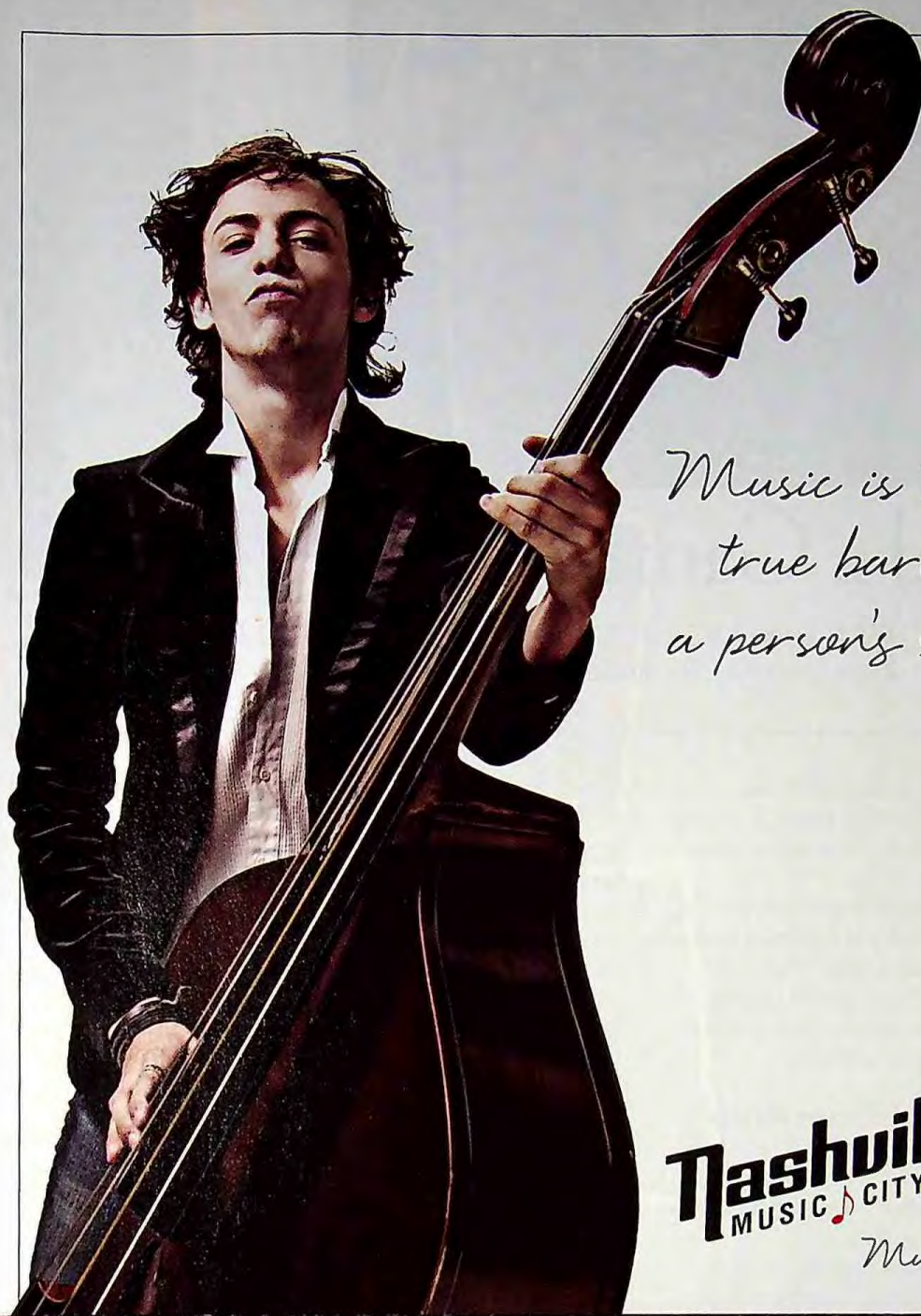
Enjoying the Inn

Get outside. Follow the trails around the inn's 320 acres, and explore the vineyards. Or get to sipping. Each guest receives complimentary tickets for a tour and tasting at the adjacent Williamsburg Winery. It's all about the experience. ●

Wedmore Place: 5810 Wessex Hundred, Williamsburg, VA 23185; www.wedmoreplace.com or (757) 941-0310. In November, rates start at \$235 Sunday-Thursday and \$275 Friday-Saturday.

The rich greens in the Lombardy room complement the dark walnut floor.





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Dilworth Neighborhood Grille in Charlotte, North Carolina, dishes up great food, along with exciting sports on big screens. Best of all? It's the kind of place you can take your family.

**DINE LIKE
A CHAMPION
TODAY**

Dinner and a Game

Watch your sports teams with other fans at a great spot in one of these fine neighborhoods when you travel. We've rounded up some favorites. By **Annette Thompson**

Dilworth Neighborhood Grille

911 East Morehead Street, Charlotte, NC 28204; www.neighborhoodgrille.com or (704) 377-3808. This eatery caters to families and fans alike (separate smoking section upstairs).

Favorite teams: Carolina Panthers, Pittsburgh Steelers, New York Yankees, and the teams from Auburn University, The University of Georgia, West Virginia University, and Michigan State University

What to order: Chicken Spiedie—a marinated, grilled Italian chicken dish—served atop pizza or in a wrap sandwich.

The Camden Pub

647 West Pratt Street, Baltimore, MD 21201; www.camdenpub.com or (410) 547-1280. This popular watering hole (no smoking) around the corner from the Babe Ruth

Birthplace and Museum tips its cap to all teams, but really comes alive when the home teams play.

Favorite teams: Baltimore Orioles and Baltimore Ravens
What to order: "Bawlmer" Wings, roasted in Old Bay seasoning and butter, and the chunky crab cakes.

King Street Grille

304 King Street, Charleston, SC 29401; www.thekingstreetgrille.com or (843) 723-5464.

Favorite teams: New York Yankees, Pittsburgh Steelers
What to order: Buffalo wings and build-your-own chopped salads vie for the most popular items.

The Press Box

222 South Dale Mabry Highway, Tampa, FL 33609; www.pressboxsports.com or (813) 876-3528. Lots of televisions, no smoking, and one of the best burger menus

in town bring in big sports names passing through the Tampa Bay area.

Favorite teams: While The Press Box won't admit to being partial to any single team (they love all sports), you can meet Tampa Bay Buccaneers' players here every Tuesday night during the football season.

What to order: More than a dozen varieties of burgers and 15 different sauces for wings.

Manuel's Tavern

602 North Highland Avenue, Atlanta, GA 30307; www.manuelstavern.com or (404) 525-3447. A long-standing fave—it's made the best bar list from *Esquire*—Manuel's keeps the crowds happy with multiple dining rooms and ample parking. The main dining room is smoke free.

Favorite teams: Atlanta Braves, Georgia Tech, and all SEC and ACC teams
What to order: The "J.J.

Special" burger, served on wheat toast with Swiss and American cheese, and GrandBobby's Pork Chop Sandwich, a boneless, marinated, grilled chop on a kaiser roll.

Bugsy's Pizza Restaurant and Sports Bar

111 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314; www.bugsypizza.com or (703) 683-0313. Owned by 17-year NHL veteran Bugsy Watson, this upstairs pub, formerly known as the Penalty Box, attracts crowds for D.C. teams. Smoking is allowed upstairs, but not in the downstairs pizzeria.

Favorite teams: Washington Capitals, Washington Wizards, Washington Redskins, Washington Nationals, and any hockey team

What to order: Housemade pizzas, especially the Chicken B.B.Q. and Margherita. ●



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Opening in 2009

Cypress-ringed Lake Russell is one of the largest undeveloped bodies of water in the state. It's about a 10-minute hike from the Learning Center. **BELOW:** The Nature Conservancy removes nonnative plants and replaces them with ones that grow naturally. The plants welcome more wildlife to the preserve.

Disney's Natural Surprise

Imagine a pristine land where millions of flowers find sunshine and wildlife roams free. It's unlike any other Disney park. By **Annette Thompson**

While the colors of the world whirl at Walt Disney World, a softer, greener side beckons you to visit. The Disney Wilderness Preserve, 12,000 acres of former ranchland, provides a glimpse of natural Florida just 15 miles south of the Magic Kingdom. There's magic here too.

Started as one of the largest wetland mitigation projects in the U.S. (Disney donated the land to The Nature Conservancy to offset its theme park development), the preserve holds huge lakes and prairies of palms and pines. There's no choreography here—just an outpouring of nature putting on its everyday show.

A Green Conservation Learning Center using geothermal energy is staffed by a knowledgeable crew who explains the land's progress from ranch to preserve. Three miles of trails invite the truly hearty to wander around (don't forget to apply bug spray). We recommend the hike to the undeveloped and cypress-rich Lake Russell.

Flora and Fauna Recognized as the headwaters of the Everglades—a mixture of piney flatlands, wetlands, and prairies—the preserve filters the waters flowing out of the Orlando area. The staff restores the vegetation by removing nonnative species and controlling burns to stimulate seed production.

Each fall flowers burst into bloom throughout the sunny prairies. Meadows of yellow sunflowers, purple blazing stars, pink asters, and goldenrod fill the horizon.

About 20 pairs of endangered Florida scrub jay live here, as do 13 pairs of bald eagles and a few crested caracara. In November birds funnel through here on their migration. Bluebirds dive down to snatch insect meals. Look for Canadian bobolinks, robins, swallow-tailed kites, and eastern meadowlarks. You might even glimpse a mouse scurrying across a field.

Whether you take a hike through the wetlands or simply rest at a picnic table, you'll see the natural Florida, a place of peace as well as imagination. ●



Disney's Wilderness Preserve

Located 15 miles south of Orlando off the Orange Blossom Trail (driving directions are on the Web site). Visit www.nature.org, or call (407) 935-0002. Admission: \$3 adults, \$2 ages 6-17. Hours: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday.

PHOTOGRAPHS: CARY JOBE



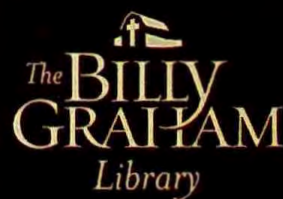
EXPERIENCE WHERE AMERICA'S PASTOR
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Come visit the Billy Graham Library in Charlotte, N.C., and tour the restored home where Billy Graham gave thanks as a young man. Retrace his dynamic journey from simple farm boy to international ambassador of God's love through state-of-the-art exhibits and historical retrospectives. Admission is free. For more information, please call 704-401-3200 or visit billygraham.org/Library.



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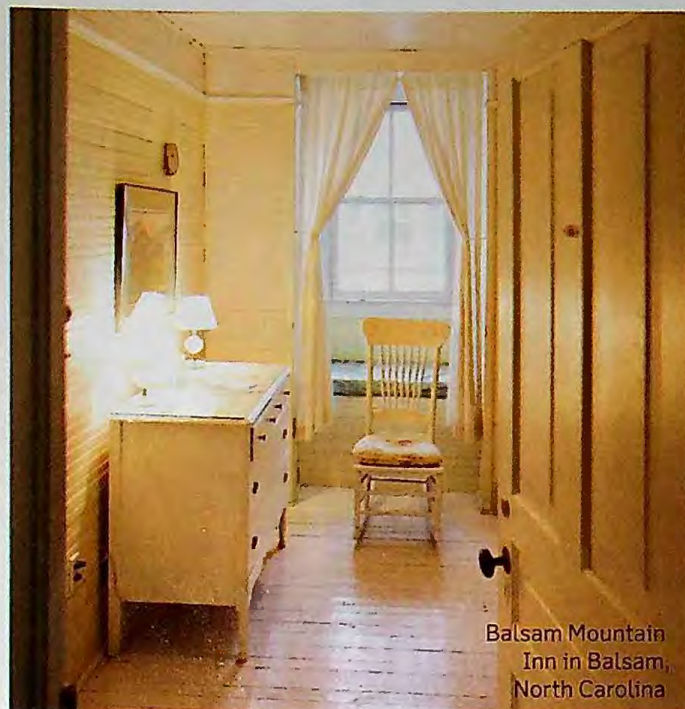

The BILLY GRAHAM
Library

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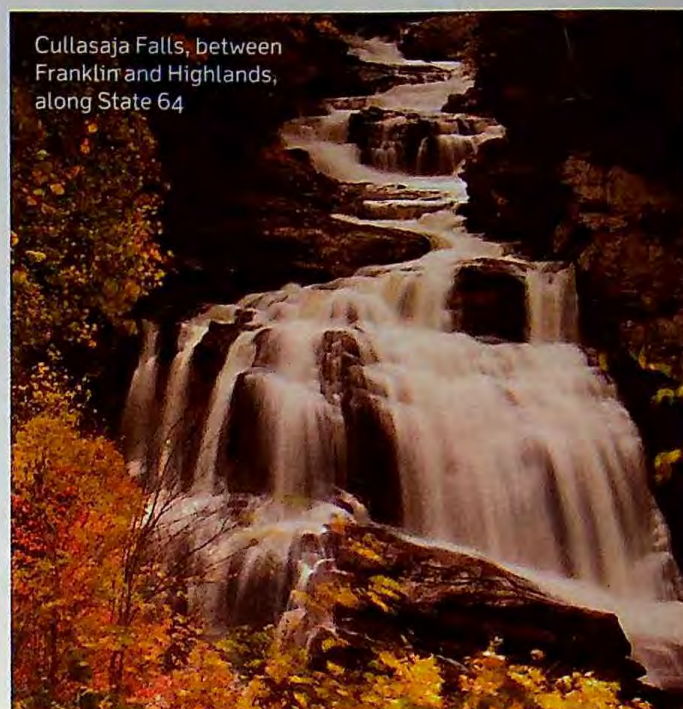
Western Carolina, Inn or Out

Consider our two ways to experience the best of the season in the mountains.

By Taylor Bruce, Jennifer V. Cole



Balsam Mountain
Inn in Balsam,
North Carolina



Cullasaja Falls, between
Franklin and Highlands,
along State 64

Stay Inn Even after 100 years of mountain solitude, Balsam Mountain Inn, opened in 1908, remains as tranquil as ever. According to one guest, "I just sort of fell in love with the rocking chairs." Gather on the 100-foot-long, driveway-wide porch (or by one of the inn's 225 windows) to gaze out on a panorama of yellow poplar, sassafras, and the area's namesake balsam fir. When supper calls, follow the aroma of apple-honey barbecue and pan-seared local trout downstairs before you retire to the library or your own cozy room. Without TVs or phones, the 50 spacious rooms could house a family of sleeping black bears until spring. www.balsaminn.com or 1-800-224-9498. Rates start at \$145.

Get Out The distance between Franklin and Cashiers, North Carolina, stretches a mere 30 miles, but the meandering journey along State 64 is nothing short of awesome. Sun filters through a kaleidoscope of orange, red, and yellow foliage. Waterfalls dot the periphery. Mountain vistas take your breath away. And every few miles there's a hiking trail or park to check out. Between Franklin and Highlands, turn off the highway and drive through a cathedral of trees to Cliffside Lake. From here, follow one of seven hiking trails. Just before Cashiers, a short detour on State 107 takes you to Whitewater Falls, the highest waterfall east of the Rockies. Slow down and explore. When was the last time you took a whole day to drive 30 miles? Talk about getting the most out of a tank of gas. ●

Four More Stops

- **For golden apples**, homegrown butternut squash, and a corn maze (\$5), visit third-generation Deal Farms near Franklin. 4402 Murphy Road; www.dealfarms.com or (828) 524-5151.
- **When temps drop to the low 40s**, try Highland Hiker in Cashiers for mountaineer gear of all sorts. www.highlandhiker.com or (828) 743-1732.
- **Pan for nuggets of gold** and gemstones, such as amethyst and citrine, at Jackson Hole Trading Post and Gem Mine between Franklin and Highlands and keep what you find. 9770 Highlands Road; www.jacksonholegemmine.com or (828) 524-5850. Buckets cost \$10 or \$30.
- **Downtown Highlands** is a playground for art lovers. Watch Robin Piscitelli carve logs and tree stumps into lustrous bowls and vases at his Tree Turnings studio. 468 Main Street; www.bigburl.com or (828) 526-3433. Or visit Tin Roof Studio, where 150 artists' works are available under one roof. 1990 Dillard Road; www.tinroofhighlands.com or (828) 526-3900.

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Home & Gar

This nontraditional color palette breathes elegance and exudes an air of organic ambience, perfectly suited to Thanksgiving's harvest. (To learn more about this tablescape, turn to page 48.)



Earthy



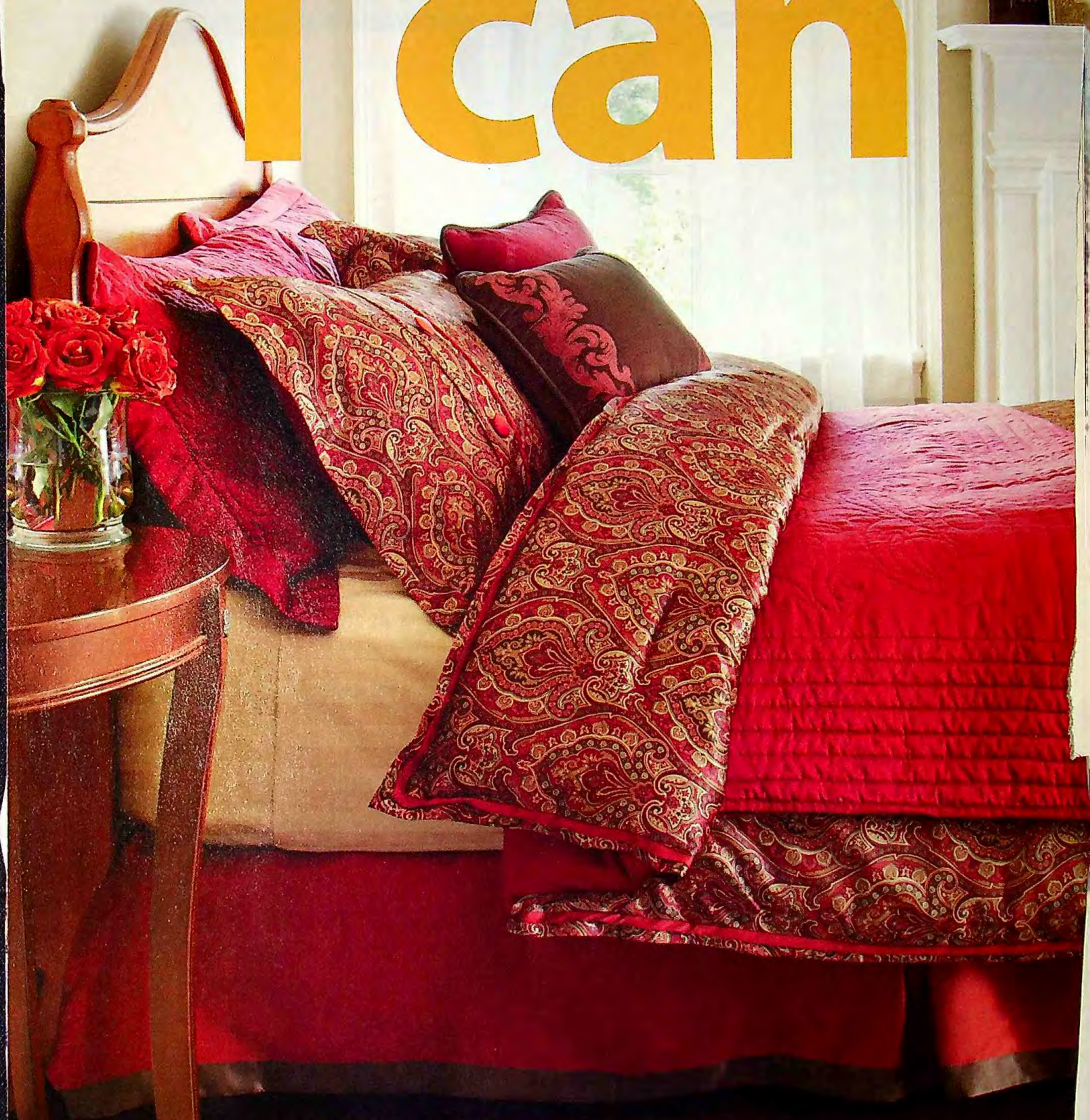
den

More inspiration for your Thanksgiving tablescape:
southernliving.com/falltable

and Elegant

Give your Thanksgiving table a new look with this rich palette. By **Ellen Ruoff Riley**, photography **Ralph Anderson**, styling **Scott Martin**

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BUILDING BLOCKS



Designer Tommy Porter arranged each bouquet in his hand before placing it in the vase.

- First, he arranged the ligustrum berries to cascade over his fist.
- He added the calla lilies in the center and the fiddlehead ferns and moss to the bouquet's interior.
- He cut the stems the same length, appropriate to the container size, and wired them loosely together. Then he placed the arrangement into the vase.
- As the final touch, he clustered together skewered blackberries.



ABOVE: Small arrangements create an intimate table and may be moved as needed to accommodate the food. ABOVE, LEFT: Combine refined elements with more rustic pieces for a naturally dazzling place setting. Iron-handled cutlery reinforces the earthy, dark-toned theme while complementing the pewter, slate, and glass.

Holiday colors have the potential to be classic or cliché. For instance, a traditional Thanksgiving centerpiece appears in vibrant shades of pumpkins, glowing chrysanthemums, and autumn's last leaves. While this time-tested palette has its place, designer Tommy Porter's view differs from the iconic approach. "To me, orange and yellow have become exhausting," he says. "I want our Thanksgiving table to be earthy, elegant, and serene—the way you want to feel when you're sitting around the table with your family."

The Idea Tommy clustered several lush bouquets in the table's center for an intentionally scaled-back arrangement. "I'm over the large, expected display in the middle of the table. I prefer small containers that can be moved around when setting up dinner," he says.

The Materials Small zinc tins are among his favorites. He chose the same style in three sizes so that they would nest together compatibly on the table. The simple lines make them perfect for holding a petite but substantial assortment of interesting natural materials.

- **Ligustrum berries**—"I love the frosty color of these berries," Tommy says. He used the berry

clusters as the starting point for the arrangements. (Note: These berries are for display only.)

- **Calla lilies**—The elegance of these wine-colored flowers is undisputed, and you don't need many to take an arrangement to the next level.
- **Fiddlehead ferns**—This is the subtle surprise of the arrangement. The slightly fuzzy coils add texture, color, and movement to the bouquets.
- **Moss**—Tiny tufts of brilliant green moss on stems (available at flower shops) are wired onto florist picks and inserted into the bouquets.
- **Blackberries**—"The fruit adds the final touch and brings the harvest to the table," Tommy says. Each large berry was placed on a bamboo skewer and inserted into the arrangement.

The Look Well-chosen elements make this table lovely. To create a memorable setting, Tommy used his family's wine goblets and pewter plates. Slate place mats anchor each setting, with recycled glass chargers accenting the pewter and salad plates. A single sweetgum leaf tops each napkin as a nod to the season.

Bring this look to your dining room by choosing natural materials from the garden and then pairing those simple elements with several exquisite flowers from a florist. Such small arrangements, easy and elegant, offer a new approach to decorating the holiday table. ●

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Around Your Garden

For November... Our Garden Editor offers tips and ideas for you. By **Gene B. Bussell**

◀ **Seasonal Decorations** Pumpkins and winter squash are readily available in a range of colors at grocery stores, roadside stands, and farmers markets. Heirloom selections offer a wider mix of colors. No time to create a display? Just choose multiple pumpkins of the same shade, and keep things simple. If you have a little more time, mix them with dried flowers. Try celosias, sunflowers, yarrows, and gomphrenas for long-lasting arrangements for your front door, foyer, or table. Indian corn, gourds, and fall leaves also pair well with pumpkins. Set up displays outside around gates, porches, and patios—places where you, your guests, and neighbors can enjoy them.

Dividing In the Lower and Coastal South, dig and divide clumps of daylilies, summer phlox, irises, and daisies. A garden fork is the perfect tool for this task. When lifted out of the ground, some clumps will fall apart easily while others may need encouragement. Set divided plants back into the soil at the original growing depth, water well, and mulch.

Lawn Care

Regularly rake leaves from your grass throughout fall. Piles of leaves can become wet blankets after it rains and can smother your lawn. Use the gathered leaves as mulch around your trees and shrubs, or add them to your compost pile. This can then be used to improve your garden soil in the spring.



◀ **Fall-Blooming Shrub** In the Lower and Coastal South, the blooms of the Confederate rose (*Hibiscus mutabilis*) will surprise you with their size and beauty. Flowers can be 4 to 6 inches across, opening white or pink and then turning red. Order them from Woodlanders, www.woodlanders.net.

Blueberries Use Northern highbush blueberries in the Upper and Middle South. Try selections such as 'Blue-ray' and 'Darrow.' Rabbiteye blueberries are best in the Lower and Coastal South. Use 'Beckyblue,' 'Climax,' or 'Tifblue.' Choose two types of rabbiteye blueberries to increase fruit crop. Plant in a sunny spot that has moist, well-drained, acid soil. Purchase plants from www.johnsonnursery.com or www.petalsfromthepast.com.

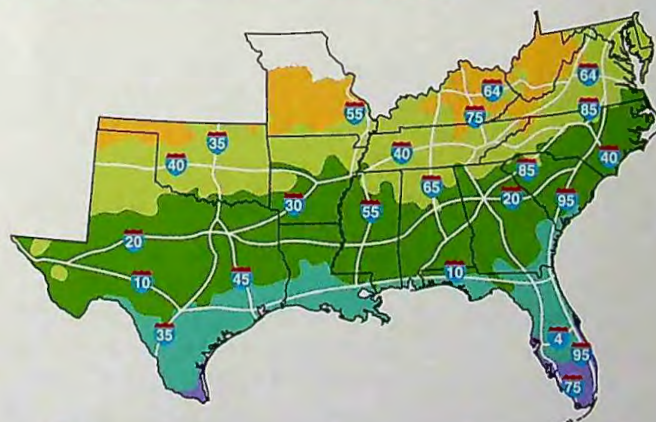
◀ Amaryllis Bulbs

Pot them at least six weeks in advance for holiday blooms. Amaryllis prefer to be crowded, so select a pot that is only a little bit larger than the bulb. Use a well-drained potting mix that is rich in organic matter, such as peat. Water well, and place in a warm, sunny room.



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Kitchen Herbs

Enjoy these botanical treats for their beauty and flavor. By **Ellen Ruoff Riley**

Parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme embody the flavors of Thanksgiving and add fragrant ambience to a kitchen when grown on a sunny windowsill. Success with herbs indoors requires a routine.

They need light, water, a trim, and a spray almost daily. At best, you will have them to use and enjoy throughout the holiday season. Then plan to move them into the garden. Here's the lowdown to ensure success.

- **Give them light.** All herbs require at least four hours of direct sunlight every day. Place them in front of the brightest window to thrive.
- **Water consistently.** Because most kitchens are tight on counterspace and windowsills don't hold large planters, small 4- or 6-inch containers offer the best options, but their convenience is offset by their every-other-day need for water. Place pots in the sink, and moisten the soil thoroughly so roots get wet. (However don't leave a pot sitting in a saucer of water; this is certain death.) Allow the pots to drain, and then move them back to their sunny home.
- **Mist for health.** Herbs flourish outdoors in humid air. Indoors, the atmosphere is much drier. Mist herbs daily to keep foliage hydrated and insects under control. Mites are the primary culprit, and these microscopic insects hate to be damp.
- **Be prepared.** If daily misting does not do the trick, rinse plants with cool water, and lightly spray them with insecticidal soap. In addition, place your herbs in the coolest sunny spot to help combat this pest.
- **Harvest and enjoy.** Trim herbs regularly to encourage new growth. Snip the tips of rosemary and thyme, and remove the outermost leaves of parsley and sage. •

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Learn how to use herbs to their maximum potential with our herb dictionary:
southernliving.com/herb-dictionary

LEFT: Group plants in a pretty display, such as on a tray. If you have to move them, the task is easy. BELOW: Use rosemary often to stimulate new growth. Indoors, this plant requires consistent moisture to flourish.



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Small Backyard, Big Escape

Clever design makes the most of the room you have. By **Steve Bender**

Short on space doesn't mean short on use. In an area barely 25 feet deep and 50 feet wide, owner Yandell Wideman of Jackson, Mississippi, enjoys three distinct spaces that give him what he wants—a truly livable backyard.

What makes it so? Start with a place to have a drink and watch the game, add a location to dine, and then finish with a spot to relax by the fire.

Landscape architect Rick Griffin of Griffin & Egger Landscape Architects gets credit for transforming what had been a boring, empty yard. "The cheapest thing you can ever purchase is good advice," notes Yandell. "Rick took one look and immediately knew what to do."

A Series of Rooms First on the list: Divide the yard into three separate outdoor rooms, each with its own function. This makes the yard seem bigger because each room is a destination.

Guests enter the yard through gates on either end or through glass doors connected to the kitchen. The latter option brings them to an outdoor extension of the kitchen, outfitted with a gas grill, a granite-topped bar with stools, and a wall-mounted TV. A roofed arbor gives shelter from sun and rain, while ceiling fans keep the air moving.

To the left is the dining area, which is clearly defined by a table and chairs sitting on a painted wooden deck. Behind the table rests a spa. A few steps to the right of the bar is the fire pit. An outdoor fireplace, decorated with items Yandell acquired in the Southwest, dominates this sunken garden room.

Get the Owner Involved Rick didn't mind the input. "I like to get clients involved in the design," he explains. "I tell them, 'Go find me stuff.'" Yandell complied. What look like tiles adorning the fireplace's mantel and the arch



TOP: Yandell's daughters, Posey and Marie, chat and enjoy the autumn evening. ABOVE: Simple plantings, including pots of seasonal color, are easy to maintain.



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Home & Garden OUTDOOR LIVING



above the firebox are actually masonry coasters he bought in Santa Fe, New Mexico. He found the copper platter that's atop the mantel while on a skiing trip to Aspen, Colorado.

Twin bottle trees crafted by a local artist are mounted on either side of the chimney. They never fail to start people talking. "I wanted them because bottle trees have a lot of history in Mississippi," says Yandell. "People say they scare off evil spirits." A heavy metal tray serves as an anchor for the iron trunks and branches.

Yandell couldn't be more pleased with the way things turned out. "A lot of times, we'll have cocktails and hors d'oeuvres by the bar and watch TV. Then I'll start cooking, and we'll move to the dining table," he says. "Finally, we'll move over to the fireplace for after-dinner drinks and more conversation. It's a nice way to spend an evening." ●



TOP: With the fireplace as its focal point, the sunken garden is a cozy hideaway. ABOVE: Distinctive bottle trees reflect the owner's personality.

Regent's Rowe

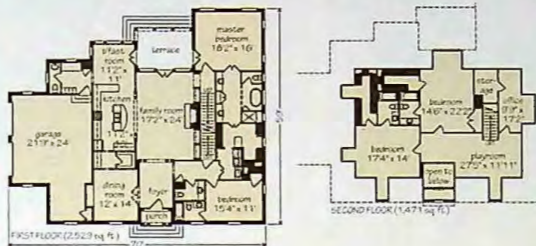
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Refined details and a classic look combine to make Regent's Rowe the highlight of any neighborhood. Embellishing the front, two dormers with arched upper sashes flank a central brick gable with a circular window. The well-designed interior offers plenty of space for a growing family. —ROBERT MARTIN

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Instead of adding on to their too-small house, this couple connected it to another one.
By Robert Martin, photography Laurey W. Glenn, styling Leigh Anne Montgomery

Make Room for

Most people think about adding onto their houses in much the same way they would order a salad. They either get the extras put on top or on the side. Not Lynn Crymes and her husband, Johnny Weeks. Extending their Charleston, South Carolina, home meant placing it out front—all of it. By building a new wing with a connector to the existing house, the couple enlarged their dwelling two-fold while giving it a completely new look.

The Only Way To Go So why not expand their house on one of its less prominent sides, or, better yet, tear it down and start over? For one thing, the couple's 1960s ranch-style house sat so deep on their lot that any rear or side extension would have required a variance, and that was an iffy pursuit. Bulldozing the place didn't make much sense either, because other than being too small, the house was sound. For a time the homeowners even considered adding a second floor, but this route fell short of their goals as well. ➤ *turn to page 60*



Family



ABOVE: In keeping with South Carolina's Lowcountry style, this front addition looks no bigger than a one-room-deep cottage. What you see here is definitely not all you get.

LEFT: Once you catch a side view of this house, it's evident that the new front addition hides the existing ranch-style house from the street. Matching standing-seam metal roofs and paint colors visually connect the two sections. A handsome pergola with gates serves as the entry for the new courtyard. The family enjoys hanging out in this outdoor space.

With such a functional, flexible way to change their living space to fit the situation, Lynn and Johnny aren't in the least bit tempted to second-guess their nontraditional home improvements.

ABOVE: Inside the new front wing, partition doors at the kitchen and simple box columns between the living and dining rooms visually distinguish the spaces. When buffet-style meals are in order, Lynn positions the doors so that they direct traffic flow and provide extra wall space for unused chairs. **BELOW:** A metal track installed between two exposed rafters enables the top-mounted doors to slide.



Tying It All Together Lynn and Johnny's renovation draws from the area's rich architecture. But selecting the right style was only half of architect Gordon Nicholson's concerns. The most pressing matter involved how to seamlessly and convincingly connect the old and new sectors together.

Extending the existing front gable of the ranch-style house forward, Gordon used this projection as a bridge to the new front wing. An L-shaped design was the result (see plan). Next, he went to work on creating a unified exterior. The existing house was faced with brick, but the architect clad the addition in wood lap siding that's spaced to align with the masonry coursing. "To visually blend the two materials together, Lynn suggested painting them the same grayish-cream color," Gordon says. Other decisions, such as covering both new and old roofs with standing-seam metal, further blend the union.

Room To Spread Out Step inside from the front porch, and you see that traditionally inspired style has been traded for a well-honed, more contemporary look. Relying on furniture arrangements rather than walls, the front wing consists of an open space that contains the new kitchen, living room, and dining room. The couple can keep an eye on their two young sons from any area of the addition. What's more, Lynn got the 10-foot ceiling heights she wanted. Various ceiling treatments establish a level of warmth and texture that gypsum drywall can't achieve. The true showstoppers of the space are the partition doors between the kitchen and dining room.

Meeting homeowners' needs and looking great—now that's an addition that works well on all fronts. ●

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LEFT: Keep the furniture minimal but not miniature. Choose an adequate-size table and chairs, and let them stand alone. Dinky furniture only makes the room uncomfortable. **BELOW:** The space made available by raising the gas fireplace provides a perfect spot for firewood, even if it is purely decorative. It sets the mood and adds a pleasant organic touch.



is having shelves that don't go completely to the ceiling. That would have visually pulled the ceiling down into the space.

The arch that bridges the sides serves two purposes. Not only does it help to frame and give scale to the painting above the fireplace, but it also moves the eye from side to side. Without the arch, all the visual interest would have stopped at the top of each unit. Now, the look flows up and over, keeping things moving. Think of it as a path. Just as you need a clear path to move around the room, the eye needs a visual path to flow easily around the space.

Raise the Blaze With the table being relatively close to the walls, fitting in a fireplace was tricky. At floor level, it would have been hidden by the table. So it is elevated to just above table height. A modern, lighter-weight firebox makes this a cinch. Gas logs help to regulate the temperature so the flame can be for function or fashion, perfect for a winter breakfast or a romantic supper for two. ●

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Get inspiration for your space with our breakfast room gallery: southernliving.com/breakfast-rooms

The Height of Style

Check out this breakfast room that takes the standard look up a notch. Literally. By **Todd Childs**

Small rooms have big problems when it comes to furnishing and decorating. How much furniture is too much? Should I hang one large painting or several little ones? Does this color make the room look smaller? Calm down, and take a deep breath. Chances are, the solution is right above your head.

Moving On Up Think in 3-D. Take advantage of your space's height. This petite breakfast room has a lot more headroom than footprint, thanks to a cathedral ceiling, but the area still could have seemed claustrophobic. The shelves on either side of the fireplace draw the eye up into the space and add interest with books and display items. The trick here



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◀ Wrapped In Warmth

For plush linens, try one of the options from the new *Southern Living* bedding collections. Southern Seasons (pictured here) combines the soft reds and warm khakis of a Southern fall with wonderful details such as raffia-style bows on the accent pillows and ruffled trim on the shams.

Southern Seasons is one of three collections available at Kohl's (www.kohls.com) in early 2009. To find out more about our bedding collections and where to find them, visit www.southernlivinghomecollection.com.

Sweet Dreams

The key to a good night's sleep is a well-made bed. Comfy linens make a difference. By **Derick Belden**

Bedrooms are often one of the last spaces people think about decorating. The reasoning seems to be, "The rest of the house looks good, so why worry about spending time and money to dress up a room people will never see?" Here's the answer: A relaxing atmosphere in your bedroom can help you sleep better.

Because a bed takes up such a large part of a room, the decor usually revolves around it. You can't really place all your furniture until you decide where the bed goes. This might take a couple of tries until the room feels right. The bedding you select is important for pulling everything together. It should complement the paint colors and other fabrics in the room.

Picking a bed and linens, however, can be a daunting task. An affordable headboard is usually short on style and quality. And bedding? Forget about it if you want good quality, nice details, and durability at a bargain price. Keep reading to find out how all that's about to change. •

Do-It-Yourself Project

For an inexpensive solution to the headboard dilemma, our resident woodworker, Kenner Patton, crafted this stylish version from lumber found at a home-improvement store. By using standard-size lumber, he kept the price for materials at less than \$100. The real trick to the head- and footboard is that they are set up to work with a standard bed frame, so you'll have a solid base for a good night's sleep. Both pieces can be sized to accommodate any mattress and painted or stained any color. You also have your choice of three leg options (pictured at right). Visit southernliving.com/projectplans to learn how to order the Edisto Bed Project Plan.

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²Oil-Rubbed Bronze is a living finish that will develop its own unique patina with use. Pella received the highest numerical score among window and door manufacturers in the proprietary J.D. Power and Associates 2007 - 2008 Windows and Patio Doors Satisfaction StudiesSM. 2008 study based on responses from 2,433 consumers measuring 7 brands and measures opinions of consumers who purchased new windows or patio doors in the previous 12 months. Proprietary study results are based on experiences and perceptions of consumers surveyed in March - April 2008. Your experiences may vary. Visit jdpower.com.

Mountain

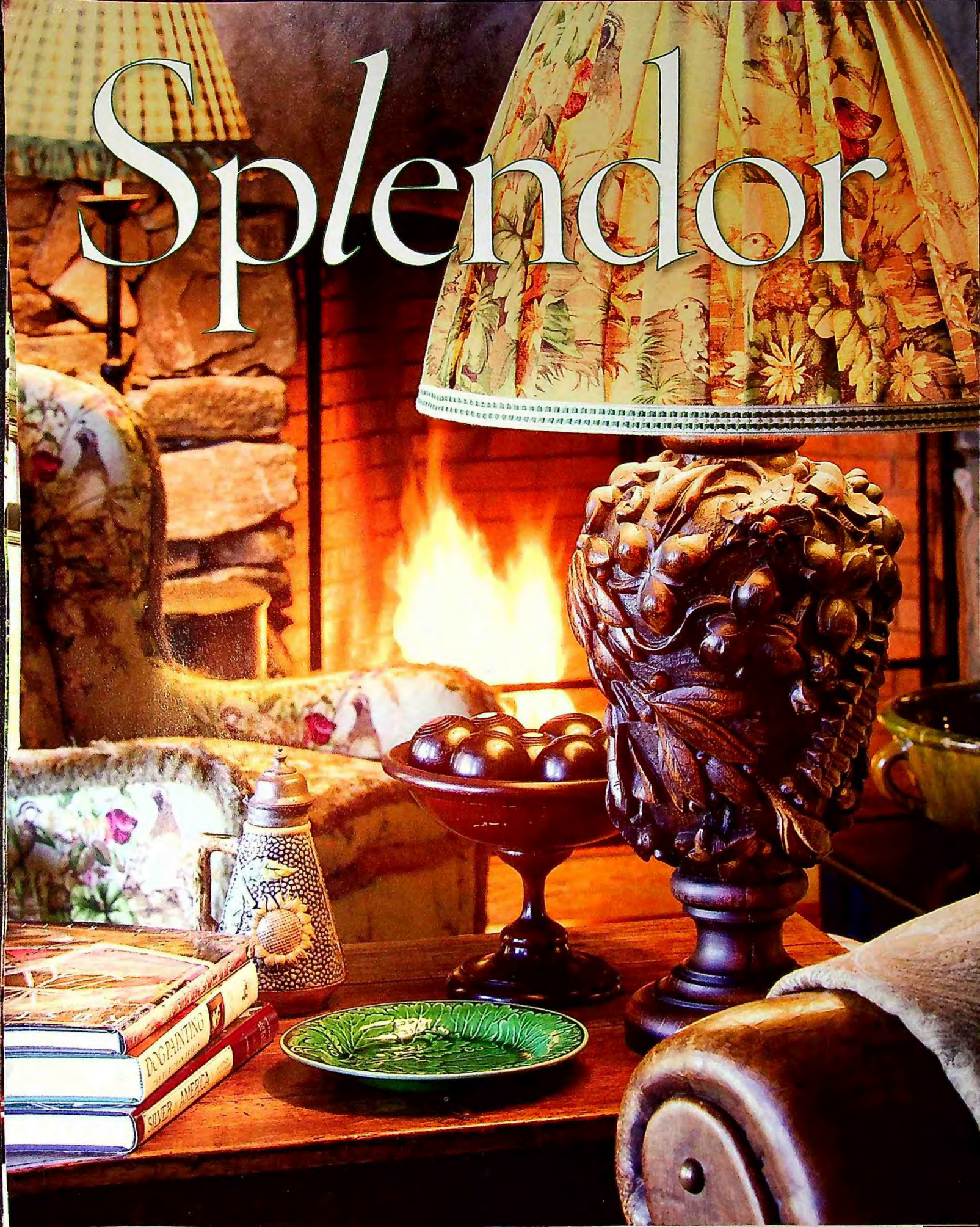
This glorious home is wrapped in cozy comfort. Let it inspire you for the holidays.

By **Sara Anderson**, photography **Charles Walton IV**, styling **Alan Henderson**



Natural beauty sets the scene even before you enter the home. Landscape architect Scott Melrose, garden designer Steve Eidson, and gardener Brett Baker created a landscape that enhances the views.

Splendor





A stone fireplace, botanical-print and checked fabrics, and several well-placed floor lamps warm the living area, which invites lounging from sunup to sundown. The homeowners carefully water the large stone below the mantel to preserve the patches of moss, enhancing the quaintness of this mountain haven.



SUDDENLY, THE BEAR WAS there, tall and black with powerful legs and shoulders. His approach was silent, but his presence was intense. He must have emerged from the twilight-soaked woods and gone around the garden shed before ending up not 20 feet from the house.

In the mountains of Western North Carolina, animals creeping up on you are a fact of life. Tom and Jane Tracy's home, near Highlands, sits on 38 acres, most of which are protected from development.

Spoils of Nature The postcard-worthy view plays a starring role in the story of this home. A mountain home doesn't have a front and back; it has a view side and an entry side. Windows and glass doors bank the back of the Tracys' house, leading out to a stone patio that steps down into a walled garden with a view that seems limitless.

Outside, you see vibrant burning-ember reds, deep greens, and honey spills of yellow. Inside, the colors are rich. With woodsy greens, soft sky blues, and cranberry reds, the furnishings all take their cues from the limitless views.

A Warm Welcome The front of the house is just as modest as the back is spectacular—a simple entryway with rustic columns. Consider that a trademark move from father-son architect team Al and Parker Platt of Brevard, North Carolina. Al explains, "We like for our entrances to put an arm around



your shoulder with a low opening, because the big room comes next. You're going to walk into the house, and—boom!—you're going to see it, along with the view, so the entrance is meant not to overwhelm you."

The Tracys' living room—with its substantial stone fireplace and locust wood stair railing—does play up the view. Atlanta designer Toby West worked with Jane to give the interior as much drama as the site. A combination of soft English florals, simple checks, and lush fringe offers the living room the rustic elegance found in fine country homes.

Resting Easy The master bedroom displays a more-is-more approach. Bravo to the beautiful screen above the headboard and the vaulted ceiling with its wood beams saved from an old barn. But the standing ovation goes to the abundant use of fabric. A green floral material wraps the walls like the woods outside and continues onto the bed, a bench, and the curtains. "I love how com-

*"This kind
of house is
TIMELESS.
Once the shine
wears off,
you can't tell
when it was
built because it
AGES WELL."*

—AL PLATT, ARCHITECT

fortable it feels," says Jane. "It's like a cocoon in here." Accents such as the antique antlers, prints, and frames give the room a bit more mountain grandeur.

Alluring and Enduring When he's not tending his garden behind the house, Tom walks the surrounding woods and wades in the creek with his grandchildren. "A lot of places have drop-dead views," says Tom. "But we wanted to get *in* it and not just stare at it from the front porch."

That explains why close encounters with wildlife are something the family relishes. The day that big black bear appeared, it uprooted a Kousa dogwood, stomped some squash, and chewed one of Jane's garden clogs to bits. Still, the Tracys hope he comes back, if just to let them witness his majestic presence, something that grounds them to their place. "I can buy more clogs," says Jane with a shrug. "The bears belong here more than we do, so you just have to get used to them." ●

Most visitors fall in love with the master bedroom at first sight—probably because the comfort factor is off the charts. All the walls are fully upholstered in floral fabric with impressive double tracks of piping for the trim.



7 Relax with our gallery of majestic mountain retreats, and view sources: southernliving.com/mountain-retreats

A Nod To

The container steals the show when you pair faux bois with simple plants.



Nature

By Ellen Ruoff Riley, photography Ralph Anderson, styling Sissy Lamerton



Place the planter on a tray to protect furniture from moisture and scratches. For easy maintenance, use a kitchen baster to squirt water directly on the soil and to prevent spills.

Stylish Step-by-Step

R

ROMANCE AND RELATIONSHIPS: IT SOUNDS LIKE an unlikely description for pairing containers and their contents. But when an attractive planter gets hooked up with natural elements that bring out its best, the result is a marriage of materials that comes together in a fabulous display.

Enamored With Faux Bois Leave it to the French to find romance in concrete. More than a century ago, they perfected the art of stylized cement planters (and furniture) that reflected the textures of tree bark and lichen. Called *faux bois*, or false wood, authentic pieces now wield hefty price tags. But artisans such as Richard Taylor in Atlanta are bringing the art form back down to Earth with a new passion. "New faux bois planters are an affordable way to bring a nature-inspired look indoors," he says.

So Happy Together Look to the obvious for planting inspiration. Faux bois lures you into the woods and begs to be paired with ferns such as Korean rock and rabbit's foot; the heavily-textured leaves of rex begonias; and tiny trailers such as baby's tears and club moss. Discreetly rustic lady's slipper orchids play nicely in the mix. A walk outdoors can yield branches, twigs, and moss to complete the woodland setting.

Nestle plants together so there is no extra room and the container looks as if has been plucked from the forest floor.

A Low-Maintenance Approach Compromise is important in any relationship. If plants are not your thing, fill the faux bois container with florist foam and cover the top with a thick layer of moss. Gather branches from outdoors, and push them into the foam-filled container. Use one fabulous limb to make a simple statement, or pack the container with limbs in assorted heights and textures.

If you add nothing else, the arrangement will stand on its own in rustic beauty. For extra romance, however, purchase one stem of cymbidium orchids and place it into a florist water pick. Push the pick into the florist foam between the branches. Behold, you have a tasteful, no-care display. Add water to the pick every other day, and the flowers will last for several weeks. ●



1

Select a faux bois container. Then use a knife to cut florist foam or plastic foam to the appropriate size. Gently push the foam into the pot.



2

Next cover the foam with green decorative sheet moss. Allow moss to cover the top edge to blend with the container's woodland texture. Moss and faux bois are natural partners.



3

Do a quick yard pickup, or purchase bare branches from a crafts store. Insert the branches into the moss and foam.

Add a touch of color with a single orchid stem. Place it in a florist water pick, and then push it into the moss and foam. Add fresh water to the pick every other day.



4



GET THIS LOOK

Pye Parson, owner of Sol Garden home in Birmingham loves faux bois. "The look is so expressive. Each piece has the appearance of coming from an old forest, down to the smallest detail," she says. But there is more than good looks within these planters. "The unseen beauty of these new pieces is the strength of the concrete being used. They hold up beautifully, indoors or out," Pye adds.

For more information about the pieces in this story, contact Sol Garden home at (205) 595-8067.

Give the arrangement boundaries by placing the container and its complementary elements on a tray. This gives the eye a place to rest.

Break Bread Together

With their city on the mend, these New Orleans friends gather to give heartfelt thanks. By **Donna Florio**, photography **Beth Dreiling Hontzas**, styling **Rose Nguyen**, food styling **Marian Cooper Cairns**

A NEW ORLEANS-STYLE MENU

SERVES 8

Roast Pork With Garlic-Onion Gravy

Oyster Dressing

Creamed Collards

Stuffed Mirlitons

Coconut-Almond Cream Cake



Gathered round the table
(from left): Pableaux
Johnson; Bess, John,
Richard, and Mathilde
Currence; Lolis Eric Elie;
and Brooks Hamaker



A great meal with friends can help heal

most anything, which is well understood by the folks gathered around Richard and Mathilde Currence's Uptown New Orleans dining table. Their smiles shine as warmly as the silverware, and the conversation swings from pure fun to deep reflection. Hurricane Katrina is never far from anyone's mind in this place. Life is marginally back to normal, but the enormity of what was lost puts lots of things in perspective.

"Part of what the storm did was make us realize how precious these times are and that there are no guarantees for tomorrow," says Lolis Eric Elie. "The friends you've been meaning to call may no longer be there. So we're much more cognizant of taking advantage of the 'now.'" For all at this table, that means sharing favorite recipes with one another as well as with all of you.

Pableaux Johnson, who recently relocated to Louisville, Kentucky, figures his Cajun cooking will help endear him to a fresh circle of companions there. His Roast Pork With Garlic-Onion Gravy (which he admits to shamelessly stealing from Lolis) will be a powerful inducement for dinner guests. "That roast is literally irresistible," he says. "People are drawn to it."

We were drawn to the entire luscious menu and think you'll want to try these dishes for your own Thanksgiving celebration. From Lolis's mom's Stuffed Mirlitons to John Currence's amazing Oyster Dressing and Brooks Hamaker's lavish Coconut-Almond Cake, the meal is full-bodied and richly flavored. The recipes are just what you'd expect from some of New Orleans' finest home cooks. They'll enliven your table and offer a nod to the enduring strength of this unique city and its food.

Roast Pork With Garlic-Onion Gravy

MAKES 8 SERVINGS, PREP: 25 MIN., COOK: 23 MIN., BAKE: 4 HR., STAND: 20 MIN.

It's worth purchasing a meat thermometer for this recipe. We used an instant-read version, but a standard one would work equally well. Cook the roast to 180° to 185° for incredibly tender but sliceable meat, making a pretty holiday presentation. Pableaux likes to cook the roast an hour or so longer (to about 190°) for meat that falls apart.

- 1 (5- to 6-lb.) bone-in pork shoulder roast
- 10 garlic cloves, halved
- Kitchen string
- 5 tsp. Cajun seasoning
- 2 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 3 medium onions, halved and sliced
- 3 celery ribs, chopped
- 1 (14.5-oz.) can low-sodium chicken broth
- 3 Tbsp. all-purpose flour
- 5 Tbsp. cold water
- Garnishes: red grapes, sliced pears, collard green leaves, persimmons

1. Preheat oven to 325°. Make 20 small, deep cuts in roast, and insert garlic pieces. Tie roast with kitchen string, securing at 2-inch intervals. Rub Cajun seasoning onto roast.
2. Cook roast in hot oil in a large heavy skillet over high heat 2 minutes on all sides or until browned. Remove from skillet.

Reduce heat to medium. Add onions and celery to skillet; cook, stirring frequently, 5 to 8 minutes or until tender. Place onion mixture in a roasting pan; top with roast. Add broth to pan. Cover loosely with heavy-duty aluminum foil.

3. Bake at 325° for 3½ to 4 hours or until a meat thermometer inserted into thickest portion registers 180° to 185°. Remove roast from pan; cover with foil, and let stand 20 minutes before slicing.

4. Pour pan drippings through a wire-mesh strainer into a measuring cup to equal 2 cups, adding additional broth or water, if necessary. Discard solids.

5. Whisk together 3 Tbsp. flour and 5 Tbsp. cold water in a medium saucepan. Whisk in pan drippings. Cook, whisking often, over medium-high heat 6 to 7 minutes or until thickened. Serve with pork. Garnish, if desired.

—PABLEAUX JOHNSON, LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

Oyster Dressing

MAKES 8 SERVINGS, PREP: 30 MIN., COOK: 24 MIN., STAND: 10 MIN., BAKE: 45 MIN.

- 2 medium onions, diced
- 4 celery ribs, diced
- 2 red bell peppers, diced
- 2 green bell peppers, diced
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2 (8-oz.) containers fresh oysters, drained and coarsely chopped
- ¾ cup dry white wine
- ½ cup chicken broth
- ¼ cup butter
- 3 bay leaves
- 2 Tbsp. fresh thyme leaves
- 2 tsp. black pepper
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. crushed dried red pepper
- 1 tsp. hot pepper sauce
- 2 large eggs
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- Sizzlin' Skillet Cornbread, crumbled
- Garnishes: fresh parsley sprig, grated Parmesan cheese


1. Preheat oven to 375°. Sauté first 5 ingredients in hot oil in a large skillet over medium heat 15 to 20 minutes or until tender and lightly browned. Stir in oysters and next 9 ingredients; cook 3 to 4 minutes or until edges of oysters begin to curl. Remove from heat; let stand 10 minutes. Remove bay leaves.



*“Part of what the storm did
was make us REALIZE how
PRECIOUS these TIMES are...”*



Bess, John, and
Mathilde Currence



Serving suggestion

Roast Pork With Garlic-Onion Gravy is an elegant treatment for a pork shoulder or Boston butt roast.

These affordable cuts are full of flavor. Thinly slice any leftovers and serve on your favorite roll for a delicious lunch or a quick supper. This will taste great paired with coleslaw or melted cheese.

2. Place mixture in a large bowl; stir in eggs and cheese. Fold in cornbread. Place mixture in a lightly greased 3-qt. or 13- x 9-inch baking dish.

3. Bake at 375° for 40 to 45 minutes or until lightly browned. Garnish, if desired.

—CHEF JOHN CURRENCE, CITY GROCERY, OXFORD, MISSISSIPPI

Note: To make ahead, prepare recipe as directed through Step 2. Cover tightly, and freeze up to one month. Thaw in refrigerator 24 hours. Let stand at room temperature 30 minutes. Proceed with recipe as directed.

Sizzlin' Skillet Cornbread:

MAKES 6 SERVINGS, **PREP:** 15 MIN.,

BAKE: 15 MIN., **COOL:** 30 MIN.

2 Tbsp. bacon drippings

2 cups buttermilk

1 large egg

1¾ cups self-rising cornmeal mix

1. Preheat oven to 450°. Coat bottom and sides of a 10-inch cast-iron skillet with bacon drippings; heat in oven 10 minutes.

2. Whisk together remaining ingredients; pour batter into hot skillet.

3. Bake at 450° for 15 minutes or until lightly browned. Invert onto a wire rack. Cool completely (about 30 minutes).

Creamed Collards

MAKES 8 TO 10 SERVINGS, **PREP:** 20 MIN.,

COOK: 40 MIN.

Try this easy method for cutting up the bacon: Remove wrapping from bacon. Place the entire pound of cold bacon on a cutting board, and slice into ½-inch cubes.

4½ lb. fresh collard greens*

1 lb. bacon, chopped

¼ cup butter

2 large onions, diced

3 cups chicken broth

½ cup apple cider vinegar

1 tsp. salt

½ tsp. pepper

Béchamel Sauce

1. Rinse collard greens. Trim and discard thick stems from bottom of collard green leaves (about 2 inches); coarsely chop collards.

2. Cook bacon, in batches, in an 8-qt. stock pot over medium heat 10 to 12 minutes or until crisp. Remove bacon with a slotted spoon, and drain on paper towels, reserving



Creamed Collards

drippings in stock pot. Reserve ¼ cup bacon.

3. Add butter and onions to hot drippings in skillet. Sauté onion 8 minutes or until tender. Add collards, in batches, and cook, stirring occasionally, 5 minutes or until wilted. Stir in chicken broth, next 3 ingredients, and remaining bacon.

4. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low, and cook, stirring occasionally, 15 minutes or to desired degree of tenderness. Drain collards, reserving 1 cup liquid.

5. Stir in Béchamel Sauce. Stir in reserved cooking liquid, ¼ cup at a time, to desired consistency. Transfer to a serving dish, and sprinkle with reserved ¼ cup bacon.

*2 (1-lb.) packages fresh collard greens, thoroughly washed, trimmed, and chopped, may be substituted.

Béchamel Sauce:

MAKES ABOUT 4½ CUPS, **Prep:** 10 MIN.,

Cook: 9 MIN.

Béchamel (bay-shah-MEHL) is the French term for white sauce.

½ cup butter

2 medium shallots, minced

2 garlic cloves, pressed

¾ cup all-purpose flour

4 cups milk

½ tsp. salt

½ tsp. pepper

¼ tsp. ground nutmeg

1. Melt butter in a heavy saucepan over low heat; add shallots and garlic, and sauté 1 minute. Whisk in flour until smooth. Cook 1 minute, whisking constantly.

2. Increase heat to medium. Gradually whisk in milk; cook over medium heat, whisking constantly, 5 to 7 minutes or until mixture is thickened and bubbly. Stir in salt, pepper, and nutmeg.

—CHEF JOHN CURRENCE, OXFORD, MISSISSIPPI

Note: Mixture can be made ahead and stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator up to two days. Warm sauce over low heat before using.

Stuffed Mirlitons

MAKES 8 SERVINGS, **PREP:** 30 MIN.;

COOK: 1 HR., 12 MIN.; **COOL:** 30 MIN.;

BAKE: 30 MIN.

Toss baby greens with a tangy vinaigrette to pair with the rich mirlitons as a first course.

4 medium mirlitons (chayote squash)
(about ¾ lb. each)

1¼ lb. peeled, medium-size raw shrimp
(31/35 count)

½ cup butter

1 medium onion, finely chopped

½ medium-size green bell pepper, chopped

2 celery ribs, finely chopped

3 green onions, chopped

3 garlic cloves, minced

¼ cup chopped fresh parsley

1¼ cups fine, dry breadcrumbs, divided

¾ tsp. salt



Taste of the South

Mirlitons, or chayote (chi-OH-tay) squash, are common in South Louisiana cooking. Their flavor is very mild, rather like a cross between zucchini and cucumber, so they make a great foil for rich stuffings.

You can substitute zucchini or even yellow squash for most recipes that call for mirlitons.

1/2 tsp. black pepper
 1/4 tsp. ground red pepper
 1 large egg, lightly beaten
 2 Tbsp. butter

1. Place mirlitons in salted water to cover in a large Dutch oven; bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Cook 45 to 50 minutes or until very tender when pierced with a fork. Drain mirlitons, and cool 30 minutes.
 2. Meanwhile, devein shrimp, if desired. Coarsely chop shrimp.

3. Preheat oven to 350°. Cut mirlitons in half lengthwise; remove and discard seeds. Carefully scoop out pulp into a bowl, leaving a 1/4-inch-thick shell. Finely chop pulp.

4. Melt 1/2 cup butter in a large, deep skillet or Dutch oven over medium heat; add onion, and cook, stirring occasionally, 5 minutes or until tender. Reduce heat to low; add bell pepper and next 4 ingredients; sauté 12 minutes or until tender. Stir in mirliton pulp; cook, stirring often, 5 minutes. Stir in 1 cup breadcrumbs until combined. Remove from heat; stir in shrimp. Stir in salt and next 3 ingredients.

5. Microwave 2 Tbsp. butter at HIGH 10 to 15 seconds or until melted. Spoon mirliton mixture into shells, pressing down lightly. Sprinkle with remaining 1/4 cup breadcrumbs. Place mirlitons in 2 (11- x 7-inch) baking dishes. Drizzle with melted butter.

6. Bake at 350° for 30 minutes or until lightly browned.

—GERRI M. ELIE, NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

Stuffed Squash: Substitute 7 medium zucchini or yellow squash for mirlitons. Omit Steps 1 through 3. Microwave squash at HIGH 3 minutes. Cut each in half lengthwise. Carefully scoop out pulp into a bowl, leaving a 1/4-inch-thick shell. Finely chop pulp. Devein shrimp, if desired; coarsely chop shrimp. Proceed with recipe as directed, beginning with Step 4.

Note: For testing purposes only, we used an 1,100-watt microwave.

Coconut-Almond Cream Cake

MAKES 12 SERVINGS; **PREP:** 30 MIN.;

BAKE: 47 MIN.; **COOL:** 1 HR., 10 MIN.

Brooks makes this cake with the precision of a skilled baker who has made his masterpiece many times. If the tops of the layers are a little rounded, he recommends leveling them



with a serrated knife. "This is a tall cake," he says, "and it needs to be level if you want your friends to admire your work before they devour the cake—as they absolutely will."

2 cups sweetened flaked coconut
 1/2 cup sliced almonds
 Parchment paper
 3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
 1 Tbsp. baking powder
 1/2 tsp. salt
 1 1/2 cups unsalted butter, at room temperature
 1 1/4 cups granulated sugar
 1 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
 5 large eggs
 1 cup whipping cream
 1/3 cup coconut milk
 1 Tbsp. vanilla extract
 1 Tbsp. almond extract
 Coconut-Almond Filling
 Coconut-Cream Cheese Frosting
 Garnishes: kumquats, currants, fresh mint sprigs

1. Preheat oven to 325°. Bake coconut in a single layer in a shallow pan 6 minutes. Place almonds in a single layer in another shallow pan; bake, with coconut, 7 to 9 minutes or until almonds are fragrant and coconut is lightly browned, stirring occasionally.

2. Line 3 (9-inch) round cake pans with parchment paper. Grease and flour paper.
 3. Sift together flour, baking powder, and salt in a very large bowl.

4. Beat butter at medium speed with a heavy-duty electric stand mixer until creamy; gradually add sugars, beating until blended. Beat 8 minutes or until very fluffy, scraping bottom and sides of bowl as needed. Add eggs, 1 at a time, beating well after each addition (about 30 seconds

per egg). Stir in whipping cream and next 3 ingredients.

5. Gently fold butter mixture into flour mixture, in batches, just until combined. Pour batter into prepared pans.

6. Bake at 325° for 30 to 32 minutes or until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool in pans on wire racks 10 minutes; remove from pans to wire racks, and cool completely (about 1 hour).

7. Place 1 cake layer on a serving plate. Spread half of chilled Coconut-Almond Filling over cake layer. Top with 1 layer, pressing down gently. Repeat procedure with remaining half of Coconut-Almond Filling and remaining cake layer.

8. Gently spread Coconut-Cream Cheese Frosting on top and sides of cake. Press toasted coconut onto sides of cake; sprinkle toasted almonds on top. Garnish, if desired.

—BROOKS HAMAKER, NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

Coconut-Almond Filling:

MAKES 3 CUPS; **PREP:** 10 MIN., **COOK:** 5 MIN., **CHILL:** 8 HR.

This filling acts as a glue to hold the layers together and works best when chilled, so don't skip that step.

2 Tbsp. cornstarch
 1 tsp. almond extract
 1 1/4 cups whipping cream
 1/2 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
 1/2 cup unsalted butter
 2 1/4 cups loosely packed sweetened flaked coconut
 1/4 cup sour cream

1. Stir together cornstarch, almond extract, and 2 Tbsp. water in a small bowl.

2. Bring whipping cream, brown sugar, and butter to a boil in a saucepan over medium heat. Remove from heat, and immediately whisk in cornstarch mixture. Stir in coconut and sour cream. Cover and chill 8 hours.

Coconut-Cream Cheese Frosting:

MAKES ABOUT 3 CUPS; **PREP:** 10 MIN.

Beat 2 (8-oz.) packages cream cheese, softened, and 1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened, at medium speed with an electric mixer until creamy. Gradually add 2 cups powdered sugar, beating at low speed until blended. Increase speed to medium, and beat in 1 Tbsp. cream of coconut and 1 tsp. vanilla extract until smooth. ●

Time-saving Tip

No doubt about it, Coconut-Almond Cream Cake is a lot of work, but it's worth every second. You can save time by making and freezing the layers up to a month in advance.



Food Executive Editor Scott Jones brilliantly pairs this delicious menu with wine: southernliving.com/wine

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Healthy Living



Good-for-You Gifts

Start shopping now to keep the holidays low key and fun. Let our editors show you how.

By **Bridget Sellers**, photography **Van Chaplin**, styling **Lisa Powell Bailey**

Wellness is the one thing that we all want for Christmas. And because the best ideas come by word of mouth, we decided to share our favorite gifts for feeling great. These items are easy to find online, affordable (most are less than \$50!), and each was personally recommended by one of us at *Southern Living*. ➔ turn to page 86

"I enjoy giving items that promote warmth on cold winter days. Teas are healthier than coffee but still give you that little boost."

—ALLISON BARNES, ASSISTANT FEATURES EDITOR



Delicious and Nutritious Treats

- Whole Grain Marshmallow Crispy Bars (see recipe at above, right)

"These bars are simple to make, taste great, and pack easily. Wrap them up and put in a stocking, or set them out for Santa. I don't think he'll miss the cookies." —NORMAN KING, TEST KITCHENS PROFESSIONAL

- A share of a local CSA (Community Supported Agriculture), www.localharvest.org

"As a foodie I think this is just about the coolest gift I could ever receive." —SCOTT JONES, FOOD EXECUTIVE EDITOR

- ◀ Category 5 (red), RayLen Winery, www.raylenvineyards.com

- Grand Cuvée Blanc de Blanc (Champagne),

EDITOR'S PICK

Whole Grain Marshmallow Crispy Bars

MAKES 24 BARS; **PREP:** 15 MIN., **COOK:** 5 MIN., **STAND:** 15 MIN.

- 3 Tbsp. butter
- 1 (10.5-oz.) bag miniature marshmallows
- 1 (15-oz.) box multi-grain cluster cereal
- 1½ cups dried cranberries, divided
- Vegetable cooking spray

1. Melt butter in a large saucepan over low heat. Add marshmallows, and cook, stirring constantly, 4 to 5 minutes or until melted and smooth. Remove from heat.
2. Stir in cereal and 1 cup dried cranberries until well coated.
3. Press mixture into a 13- x 9-inch baking dish coated with cooking spray. Chop remaining ¼ cup dried cranberries, and sprinkle on top. Let stand 10 to 15 minutes or until firm. Cut into 24 bars.

Note: For testing purposes only, we used Kashi GOLEAN Crunch! cereal.

Per bar: Calories 132; Fat 1.9g (sat 0.9g, mono 0.4g, poly 0.1g); Protein 2.6g; Carb 27.6g; Fiber 1.7g; Chol 4mg; Iron 0.6mg; Sodium 22mg; Calc 8mg.

Beachaven Vineyards & Winery, www.beachavenwinery.com

- Viognier (white), Chester Gap Cellars, www.chestergapcellars.com

"Wine is a great gift. It's full of antioxidants, so in moderation it's a healthy way to enjoy a drink during the holidays." —SCOTT JONES

For the Home

- Handcrafted ceramic mugs by Rob and Beth Mangum in North Carolina, www.mangumpottery.com

"I always buy gifts from local artists while traveling. They have more meaning when I can tell the artists' stories or describe the studios where the pieces are made." —TANNER C. LATHAM, ASSOCIATE TRAVEL EDITOR

- ◀ Flora candle by Hillhouse Naturals Farm, Ltd. in Kentucky, www.hillhousestore.com

"Candles are long lasting, beautiful, and invite contemplation—all important qualities when giving someone something special."

—JULIA HAMILTON, HOME SENIOR WRITER

- Aluminum hand-crafted ornaments, www.gardendeva.com

"The Garden Deva Sculpture Company in Tulsa, Oklahoma, is a

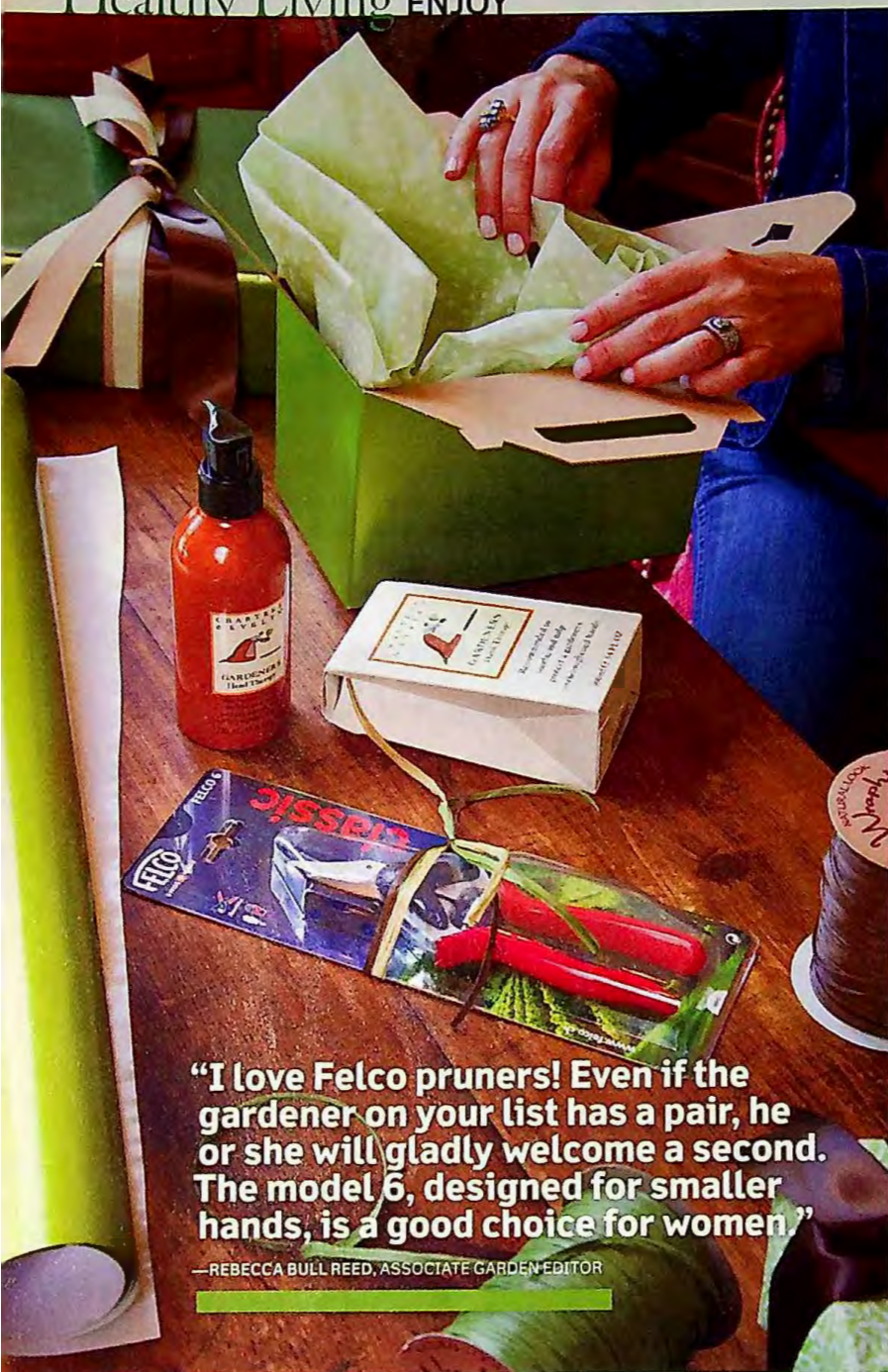


The only thing better than coffee and a cigarette is coffee and no cigarette.

Quitting smoking isn't easy. But new Commit® Cappuccino stop smoking lozenges can help. They not only calm cravings, but also soothe the irritability you get when quitting. And they're tasty, too.



Soothe Calm Commit



"I love Felco pruners! Even if the gardener on your list has a pair, he or she will gladly welcome a second. The model 6, designed for smaller hands, is a good choice for women."

—REBECCA BULL REED, ASSOCIATE GARDEN EDITOR



great little place. It has unique pieces made from recycled steel."

—TANNER C. LATHAM

A Better Way To Wake Up

◀ Sweet Cranberry green tea and Charming Spice organic black tea, www.teagora.com

"I enjoy giving gifts that promote warmth on cold winter days. Teas are healthier than coffee but still give you a little boost."

—ALLISON BARNES, ASSISTANT FEATURES EDITOR

Outdoor Therapy

• Pruners by Felco, www.felcostore.com

"I love Felco pruners! Even if the gardener on your list has a pair, he or she will gladly welcome a second. The model 6, designed for smaller hands, is a good choice for women." —REBECCA BULL REED, ASSOCIATE GARDEN EDITOR

• Gardeners Hand Therapy Cream by Crabtree & Evelyn, www.crabtree-evelyn.com



"I like to apply this before putting on my gloves."

◀ Cole's wild birdseed, www.coleswildbird.com

"This is quality birdseed, and Cole's offers a wide range of seeds to attract birds from various regions."

—REBECCA BULL REED

Tools To Keep You Moving

▶ Polar Insulated Bottle, www.rei.com

"My spinning instructor swears by her insulated water bottle because it keeps the water so cool."

—SARA ASKEW JONES, HEALTHY LIVING EDITOR

• Asics Hera Low Cut, www.zappos.com

"Specialized socks that hug your feet, add cushion, and wick away moisture are the perfect stocking stuffer for an active person."

—BRIDGET SELLERS, HEALTH AND BEAUTY EXPERT

▼ Polar heart rate monitors, www.shoppolar.com



"Those who exercise regularly should monitor their heart rate to learn their heart's optimal aerobic zone and ensure an overall safe and effective workout."

—SARA ASKEW JONES



Great Gifts for Book Lovers

• Design and architecture books by Assouline Publishing, www.assouline.com

"Great design books are as much a design resource as they are a decorative accessory. I enjoy giving them to my wife and family."

—DERICK BELDEN, HOME & GARDEN EXECUTIVE EDITOR

• Personalized bookplates, www.felixdoolittle.com

"You can make a book even more special by customizing it with a nameplate."

—AMY BICKERS MERCER, ASSOCIATE HOME EDITOR

• New, used, and rare books, www.powells.com

"With crusty pages and worn bindings, books from

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In a national survey of 310 cardiologists, 4 out of 5 endorsed **Promise® SuperShots®** for cholesterol, based on nutritional information.

These delicious fruit and yogurt-flavored blends contain natural plant sterols, ingredients clinically proven to help remove cholesterol from your body.

Enjoy daily with meals as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol, and you could see reduced cholesterol levels.

For more information on plant sterols, go to WebMD.

Plant Sterols

WebMD



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Foods containing at least 0.4 grams per serving of plant sterols, eaten twice a day with meals for a daily total intake of at least 0.8 grams, as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol, may reduce the risk of heart disease. A serving of this product provides 2 grams of plant sterols. ©2008 Unilever

Healthy Living ENJOY

antiques stores can be a cool find. I recently bought a friend a set of used food encyclopedias."

—AMY BICKERS MERCER

► **The Seasons of Cumberland Island**
by Fred Whitehead,

www.amazon.com

• **Inspiration Texas Style**, by Wyman Meinzer, www.wymanmeinzer.com

"I love coffee table books from local photographers on the rise who are being printed by smaller printers such as Bright Sky Press in Texas."

—MARK SANDLIN, DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Take Time To Treat Yourself

◀ **Pacifica Solid Perfumes**,
www.pacificacandles.com

"These organic scents have no synthetic fragrance and are perfect if you can't handle strong perfumes."

—BRIDGET SELLERS

• **Vintage clutch and jewelry**,
www.somelikeitvintage.com

"I'm a fan of vintage accessories because they never go out of style and are more interesting for having been recycled."

—SISSY LAMERTON, STYLIST

• **Cargo PlantLove Botanical Lipstick**,
www.sephora.com

"I love this lipstick—\$2 per tube goes to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. It has no petroleum derivatives, and the packaging is made of paper embedded with wildflower seeds. You can actually plant the box!"

—BRIDGET SELLERS

► **Ballmania Lip Balm SPF 20**,
www.ballmania.com

"These fun balls are filled with sun protection to keep lips young looking and moist."

—BRIDGET SELLERS

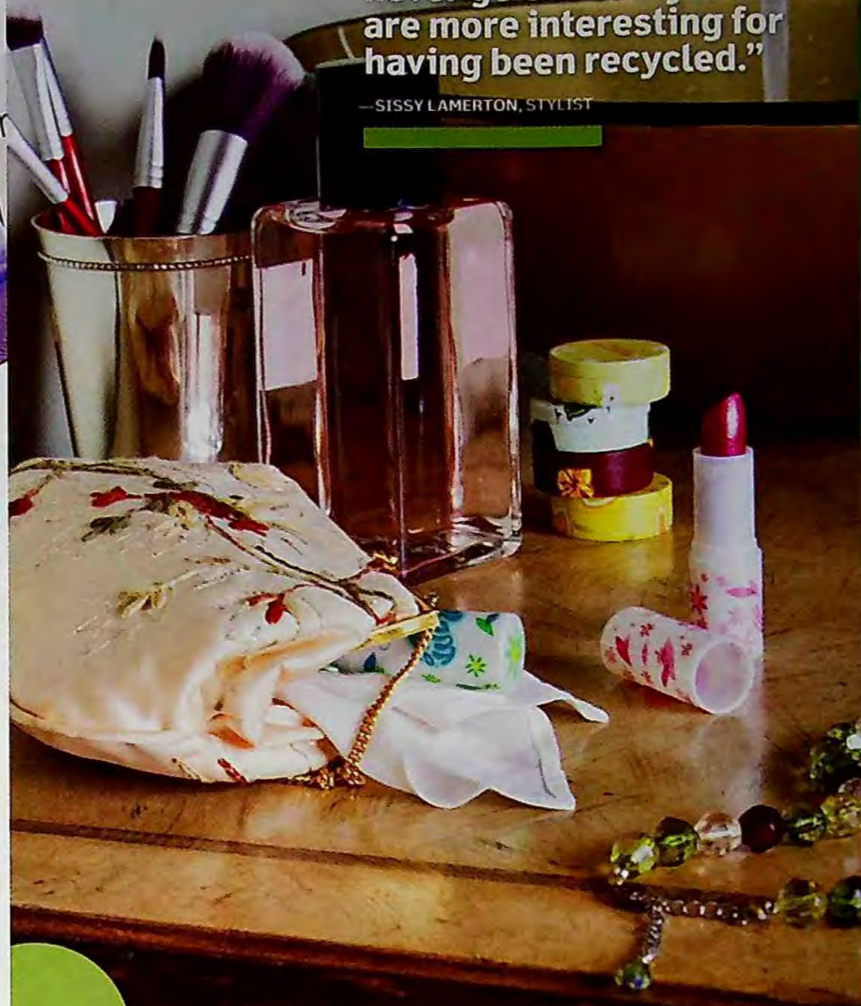


SOUTHERNLIVING.COM

Our new editors' blog gives you daily tips for a healthier life:
southernliving.com/live-healthy

"I'm a fan of vintage accessories because they never go out of style and are more interesting for having been recycled."

—SISSY LAMERTON, STYLIST



Healthy Benefits

- Exercising on ellipticals and stationary bikes helps decrease the likelihood of joint injury through circular motion that lessens impact on the body.
- Research suggests that drinking teas such as black, green, or white throughout the day may fight off cell-damaging free radicals that cause many forms of cancer such as gastric, esophageal, skin, and ovarian.
- Many medical studies indicate that drinking red wine in moderation may lower bad cholesterol levels, inhibit blood clots, and ward off Alzheimer's disease.
- Burning candles made of soy wax rather than paraffin may eliminate the release of carcinogenic toxins into the air.
- Be sure to eat those fruits and veggies! Adding 2 grams of the plant compounds sterol or stanol to your daily diet may reduce your risk of heart disease by 20%.
- Gardening is more than a fun way to exercise—it's nutritious too! Sunlight is a natural source of vitamin D that promotes healthy bones and may reduce the risk of osteoporosis.
- Perfume is a common allergen in personal care products. If you have allergies, test products that use natural or synthetic fragrance before applying heavily.

SALT HAPPENS.



290 mg



289 mg



194 mg

FIGHT BACK.



Help control blood pressure with NEW Promise® SuperShots® as part of a potassium-rich, low-sodium diet

Because salt is hidden in lots of foods, these delicious fruit blends are a good source of potassium. Diets that provide potassium help flush sodium from your body. And diets containing foods that are good sources of potassium and low in sodium may reduce your risk of high blood pressure and stroke.

Promise® SuperShots®—a deliciously unique way to have more potassium in your life.

For more information on potassium benefits, go to WebMD.

Potassium benefits

WebMD

supershots®



Stress-Free Holidays

Release the tension around you, and embrace the peace within.

By **Allison Barnes**

We all get overwhelmed this time of year, but the key to keeping our mental balance lies in being able to handle stressful situations. Use our tips to prepare yourself.

Move for Your Mood Daily exercise helps release bottled-up tension by exerting energy in a positive way, and sweating helps dissipate impurities in your body. Also, stretching, which lets your muscles “yawn,” encourages stress to melt away through your fingertips and toes.

Mental Munchies Some folks head to the fridge to find relief. Sugary, starchy comfort foods such as ice cream and potato chips create an artificial surge of energy. Opt to eat a balanced diet throughout the day, reaching for power fare such as blueberries and oranges when you need a snack.

Mind Over Matter Learn to react calmly to tension. First, draw on past experiences to form a plan of action. Second, seek support from family and friends. Third, find inspiration by doing something creative or helpful for others. ●

Sorting Out Stressors

Stress, a natural response to situations and experiences, places demands on our body's resources. There are different types of stress: Positive stress arises in situations that challenge us to grow and teach us how to change ourselves or our environment. Negative stress results from events that we cannot easily change or avoid, such as physical injury. Life events can fall into either category. “The best way to handle negative stress is to be prepared for it in advance,” says Corey Keyes, positive psychologist at Emory University in Atlanta and a member of our Healthy Living Advisory Board. “This means getting sufficient sleep, eating a good diet of fresh fruits and vegetables, and exercising regularly.”

Meet LOVAZA A PRESCRIPTION MADE FROM NATURE

LOVAZA is an effective way to lower very high triglycerides. If you have diabetes, high cholesterol or high blood pressure, you may have very high triglycerides.

There's a proven way to treat very high triglycerides starting from a natural ingredient.* LOVAZA is an FDA-approved prescription made from all-natural omega-3 fish oil. It's highly concentrated and effective. And you can only get it from your doctor.

Ask your doctor if LOVAZA is right for you • Visit LOVAZA.com or call 1-877-LOVAZA1

Important Safety Information for LOVAZA® (omega-3-acid ethyl esters): LOVAZA, along with diet, helps to lower very high triglyceride levels. If you are allergic to fish, you should not take LOVAZA. Talk to your doctor about any medications you are taking, especially those that may increase your risk of bleeding.

Possible side effects include burping, infection, flu-like symptoms and upset stomach.

See the Patient Information Leaflet on next page.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

*Individual results may vary.


LOVAZA®
omega-3-acid ethyl esters



If you don't have prescription coverage,
visit ppaia.org, or call 1-888-4PPA-NOW
(1-888-477-2669)

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PATIENT INFORMATION

LOVAZA* (lō-vā-zā)
(omega-3-acid ethyl
esters) Capsules

LOVAZA*
omega-3-acid ethyl esters

Read the Patient Information that comes with LOVAZA before you start taking it, and each time you get a refill. There may be new information. This leaflet does not take the place of talking with your doctor about your condition or treatment.

What is LOVAZA?

LOVAZA is a prescription medicine for adults called a lipid-regulating medicine. LOVAZA is made of omega-3 fatty acids. Omega-3 fatty acids are natural substances that your body needs. They are found naturally in some plants and in the oil of certain fish, such as salmon and mackerel.

LOVAZA is used along with a low-fat and low-cholesterol diet to lower very high triglycerides (fats) in your blood. Before taking LOVAZA, talk to your healthcare provider about how you can lower high blood fats by:

- losing weight, if you are overweight
- increasing physical exercise

Treatment with LOVAZA has not been shown to prevent heart attacks or strokes.

LOVAZA has not been studied in children under the age of 18 years.

What should I tell my doctor before taking LOVAZA?

Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take, including prescription and non-prescription medicine, vitamins, and herbal supplements. LOVAZA and certain other medicines can interact causing serious side effects. Especially tell your doctor if you take medicines:

- to reduce clotting — known as anticoagulants or blood thinners. These include aspirin, warfarin, coumarin and clopidogrel (PLAVIX).

Tell your doctor if you are allergic to fish.

LOVAZA may not be right for you.

Who should not take LOVAZA?

Do not take LOVAZA if you:

- are allergic to LOVAZA or any of its ingredients.

What are the possible side effects of LOVAZA?

- The most common side effects with LOVAZA are burping, infection, flu symptoms and upset stomach.

Talk to your doctor if you have side effects that bother you or that will not go away. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

These are not all the side effects with LOVAZA. Ask your doctor or pharmacist for a complete list.

LOVAZA is a registered trademark of the GlaxoSmithKline group of companies.

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gsk GlaxoSmithKline

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Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

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June 2008



Healthy Living TRY THIS

Take Control

Make wise decisions about how much to eat for good health.

By **Rachael Crawley**

Size matters when it comes to eating. You may be consuming far more than you think. "Without proper portion sizes, people can easily overeat at a meal," says Norman King, *Southern Living* Test Kitchens Professional and a registered dietician. It's all about moderation. Whether you are noshing on a snack or sitting down to dinner, keep your portions in check with these visual cues.

Fruits and Veggies You've probably been encouraged to eat your fair share of fruits and veggies every day. However, there's a big difference between eating a handful of grapes and the entire 3-pound bag you just bought at the store.

Drinks Just as you are aware of how much you're eating, consider how much you're sipping at each meal. For example, start your morning off right by pouring the recommended amount of your breakfast beverages.

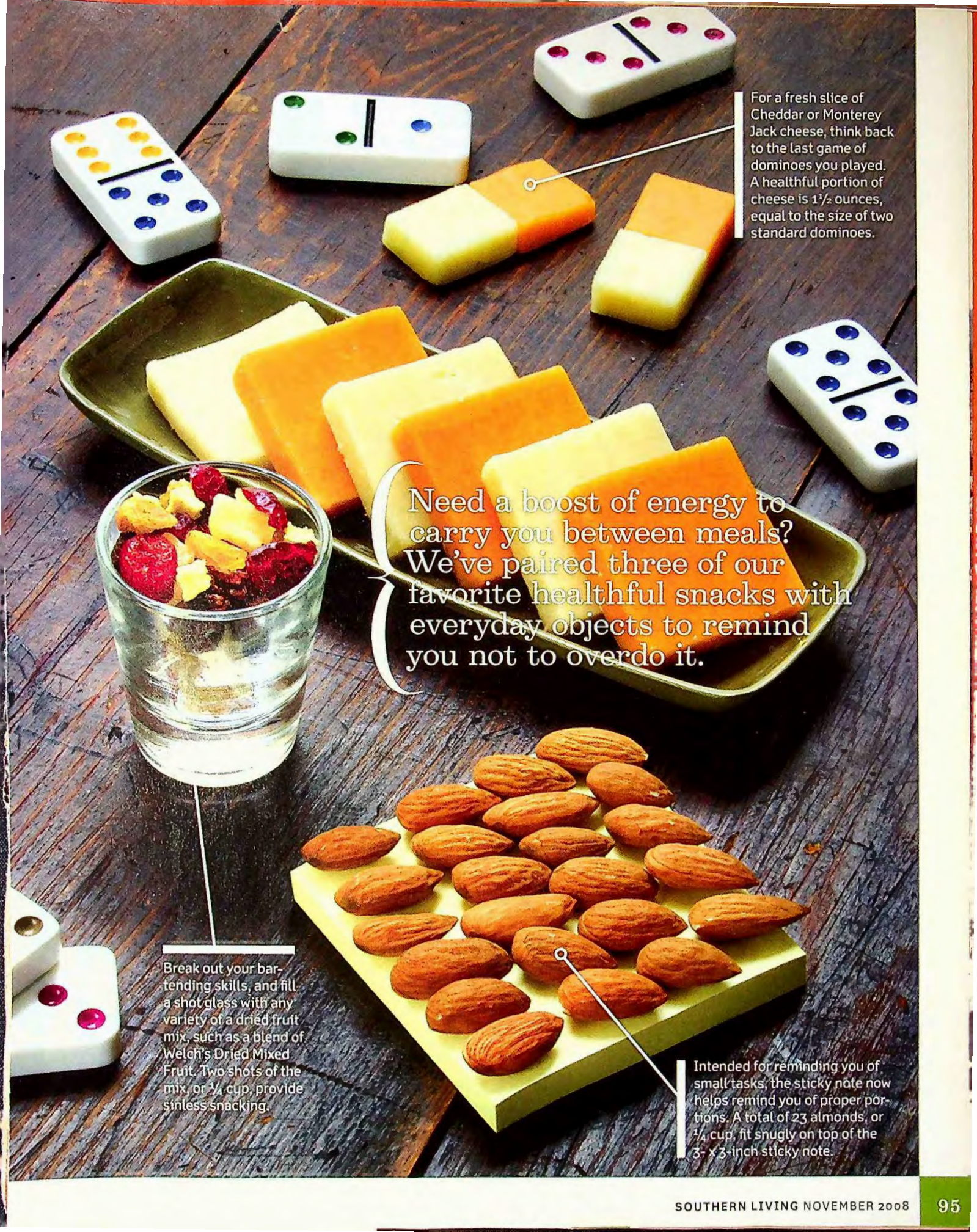
- We know drinking from your jumbo coffee mug helps to wake you up, but an 8-ounce cup of coffee provides you with a healthier amount of caffeine.
- If you want to get a good serving of vitamin C, you can either squeeze the juice from two oranges or simply buy juice glasses that hold 6 ounces of liquid, the right amount of juice to last through the entire breakfast.
- When it comes to milk, the school cafeteria knows best. The mini milk cartons



The USDA suggests you eat three servings of fruits and veggies every day. You can consume the entire serving all at once or spread it throughout the day.

Healthy Benefits

- Eating balanced meals with proper portions helps diabetics maintain normal blood sugar levels.
- Studies show that monitoring the amount of food you eat throughout the day helps reduce calorie intake.

A wooden table with several white dominoes scattered around. In the center, a green tray holds several slices of yellow and orange cheese. To the left, a glass is filled with a mix of red raspberries and yellow fruit. In the foreground, a yellow sticky note holds 23 almonds. Lines connect the text blocks to the corresponding items.

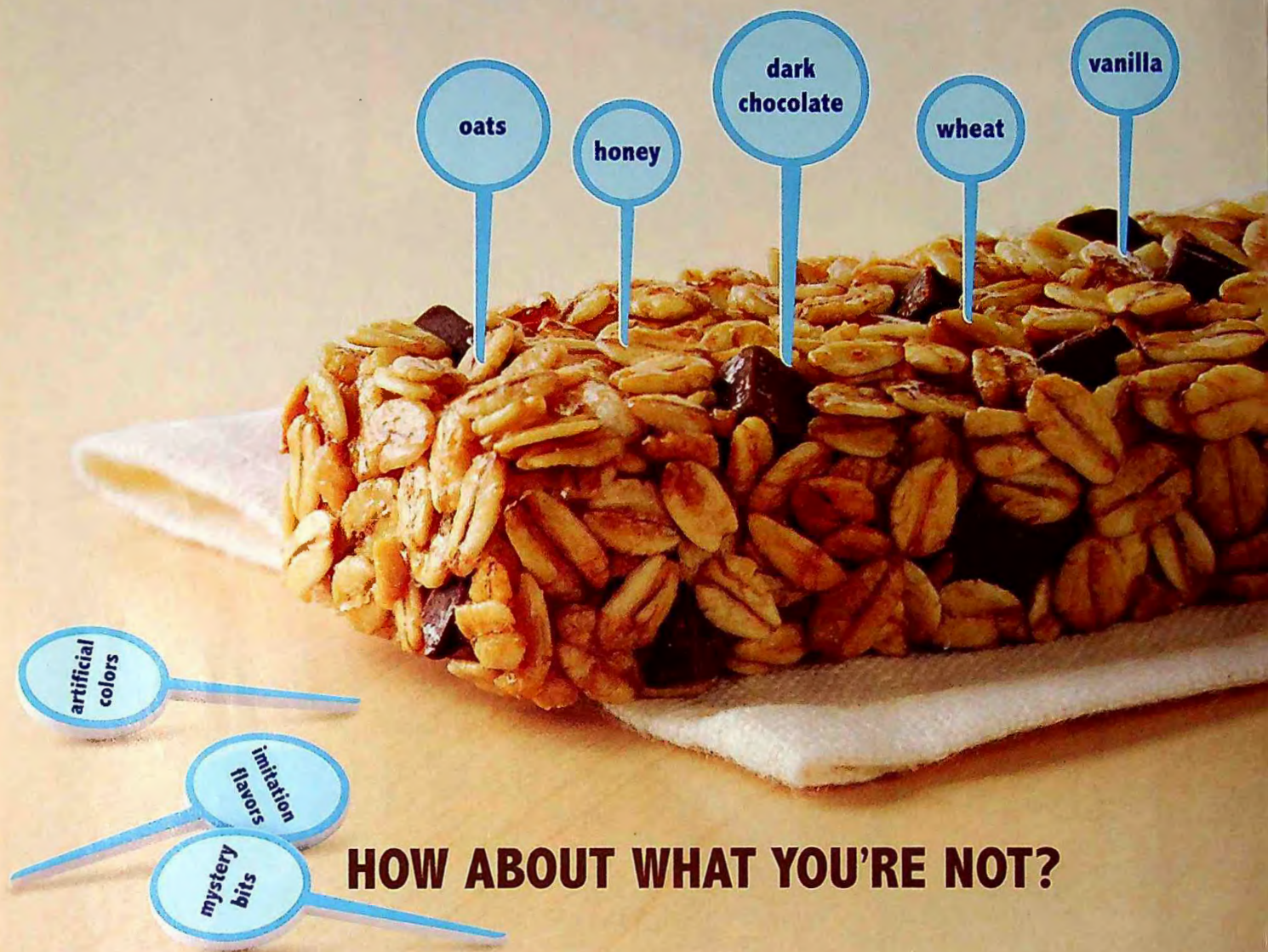
For a fresh slice of Cheddar or Monterey Jack cheese, think back to the last game of dominoes you played. A healthful portion of cheese is 1½ ounces, equal to the size of two standard dominoes.

Need a boost of energy to carry you between meals? We've paired three of our favorite healthful snacks with everyday objects to remind you not to overdo it.

Break out your bartending skills, and fill a shot glass with any variety of a dried fruit mix, such as a blend of Welch's Dried Mixed Fruit. Two shots of the mix, or ¼ cup, provide sinless snacking.

Intended for reminding you of small tasks, the sticky note now helps remind you of proper portions. A total of 23 almonds, or ¼ cup, fit snugly on top of the 3" x 3-inch sticky note.

KNOW WHAT YOU'RE EATING?



HOW ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE NOT?

*Simple Harvest™
uses only delicious all-natural ingredients. And nothing more.*

Visit us at QuakerSimpleHarvest.com

every day
should be this good



TRY THIS Healthy Living



found in the lunch line offer 8 ounces of milk, the perfect amount for a healthy portion. If you can't make it to the lunchroom, drink from an 8-ounce glass.

Portion Size vs. Serving Size

Defining portion size and serving size is vital when establishing a healthy eating routine. Portion size is the amount of food you actually eat at one time. Serving size is the amount of food recommended on a product's nutrition label. The nutrition facts don't always provide the healthiest recommended amount, so it's better not to rely on the label. For a complete listing of portion sizes, refer to the USDA's official "Dietary Guidelines for Americans" at www.mypyramid.gov. •

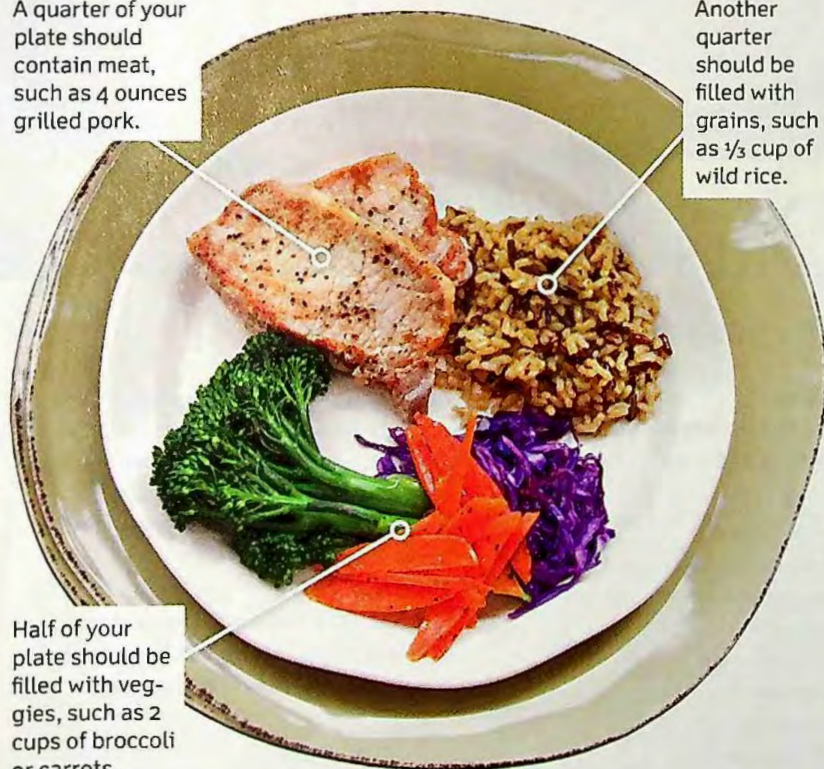
What's on Your Dinner Plate?

Along with practicing portion control, balancing carbohydrates, lean protein, and fat helps you perform at your best. "Your body requires a wide variety of nutrients to maintain optimum health," Norman says. "The more variety one has increases the possibility for meeting the daily recommended intake for essential nutrients."

A quarter of your plate should contain meat, such as 4 ounces grilled pork.

Another quarter should be filled with grains, such as $\frac{1}{3}$ cup of wild rice.

Half of your plate should be filled with veggies, such as 2 cups of broccoli or carrots.



Choose your dinnerware wisely. Using oversize dinnerware, such as a 12-inch plate, may result in eating excess calories. Studies show you'll feel just as satisfied if you use a small 9-inch plate.

**WE'D ALSO LIKE
TO CALL OUT JUST
HOW SIMPLE THIS
HOT CEREAL IS.**



*Multigrain.
All natural.
And simply delicious.*





Extraordinary Oats

Rediscover a healthy favorite with these new twists. By **Norman King, R.D.**

Even grandma knew a good ol' bowl of oatmeal is an energy powerhouse. High in quality protein and fiber, it's ideal for maintaining heart health while keeping you satisfied till lunchtime. Oatmeal is also inexpensive, simple to make, and extremely versatile. Still, enjoyed in typical bowl-and-spoon fashion, it can seem boring. Our solution? Use oats as an ingredient in great-tasting recipes to reap all of the benefits. They add nutty flavor and wholesomeness to Oatmeal-Honey Waffles, and though Mixed Berry Cobbler tastes like dessert, oats and fruit provide tons of nutrients you can enjoy any time of the day. We think grandma would approve.

Mixed Berry Cobbler

MAKES 6 SERVINGS; PREP: 10 MIN., STAND: 5 MIN., BAKE: 1 HR.

2 cups granola
 1/2 cup 1% low-fat milk
 2 (12-oz.) packages frozen mixed berries
 1/4 cup firmly packed brown sugar
 2 tsp. cornstarch
 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
 1/2 tsp. orange zest
 1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg
 Vegetable cooking spray
 Plain fat-free yogurt

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Stir together granola and milk in a small bowl. Let stand 5 minutes.
2. Toss together berries and next 5 ingre-

dients in a large bowl. Spoon berry mixture into a 8-inch square baking dish.

3. Stir granola mixture, and spoon over berry mixture. Lightly coat with cooking spray.

4. Bake at 350° for 1 hour or until bubbly. Serve with yogurt.

Note: For testing purposes only, we used Quaker 100% Natural Granola, Oats & Honey at one tasting and Heartland Original Granola Cereal at another.

Per serving: Calories 328; Fat 8.1g (sat 1.2g, mono 0.1g, poly 0.3g); Protein 8.8g; Carb 57.3g; Fiber 8.6g; Chol 1.1mg; Iron 3.1mg; Sodium 133mg; Calc 126mg

Anytime Peach Cobbler: Substitute 1 (20-oz.) package frozen sliced peaches for frozen mixed berries. Proceed with recipe as directed.

Per serving: Calories 296; Fat 7.6g (sat 1.2g, mono 0.1g, poly 0.3g); Protein 8.1mg; Carb 49g; Fiber 3.6g; Chol 1mg; Iron 2.4mg; Sodium 132mg; Calc 93mg **➔ turn to page 100**



Surprise. It's lower sodium.

Campbell's® Healthy Request® Soups
— all 25 choices —
have our lower sodium natural sea salt
added for taste you can actually taste.



TIP



Use a slotted spoon to remove the whole cloves and cinnamon stick before adding the oatmeal for Creamy Oatmeal. This will give you a balance of spices that isn't overpowering.



Creamy Oatmeal

MAKES 4 SERVINGS; PREP: 10 MIN.,

STAND: 5 MIN., COOK: 36 MIN.

Steel-cut Irish oats give this dish a chewy texture and full flavor.

1/4 cup chopped dried apricots

2 cups 1% low-fat milk

1/4 cup firmly packed brown sugar

1/2 cinnamon stick

3 whole cloves

1/4 tsp. kosher salt

1 cup steel-cut Irish oats

1. Place apricots in a small bowl with hot water to cover, and let stand 5 minutes or until plump. Drain.
2. Cook milk, next 4 ingredients, and 2 cups water in a heavy nonaluminum saucepan over medium heat, stirring often, 5 to 6 minutes or just until bubbles appear (do not boil). Remove from heat; remove cinnamon stick and cloves with a slotted spoon, and discard.
3. Stir in oats. Cook over low heat, stirring often, 30 minutes or until done. Top with apricots, and serve immediately.

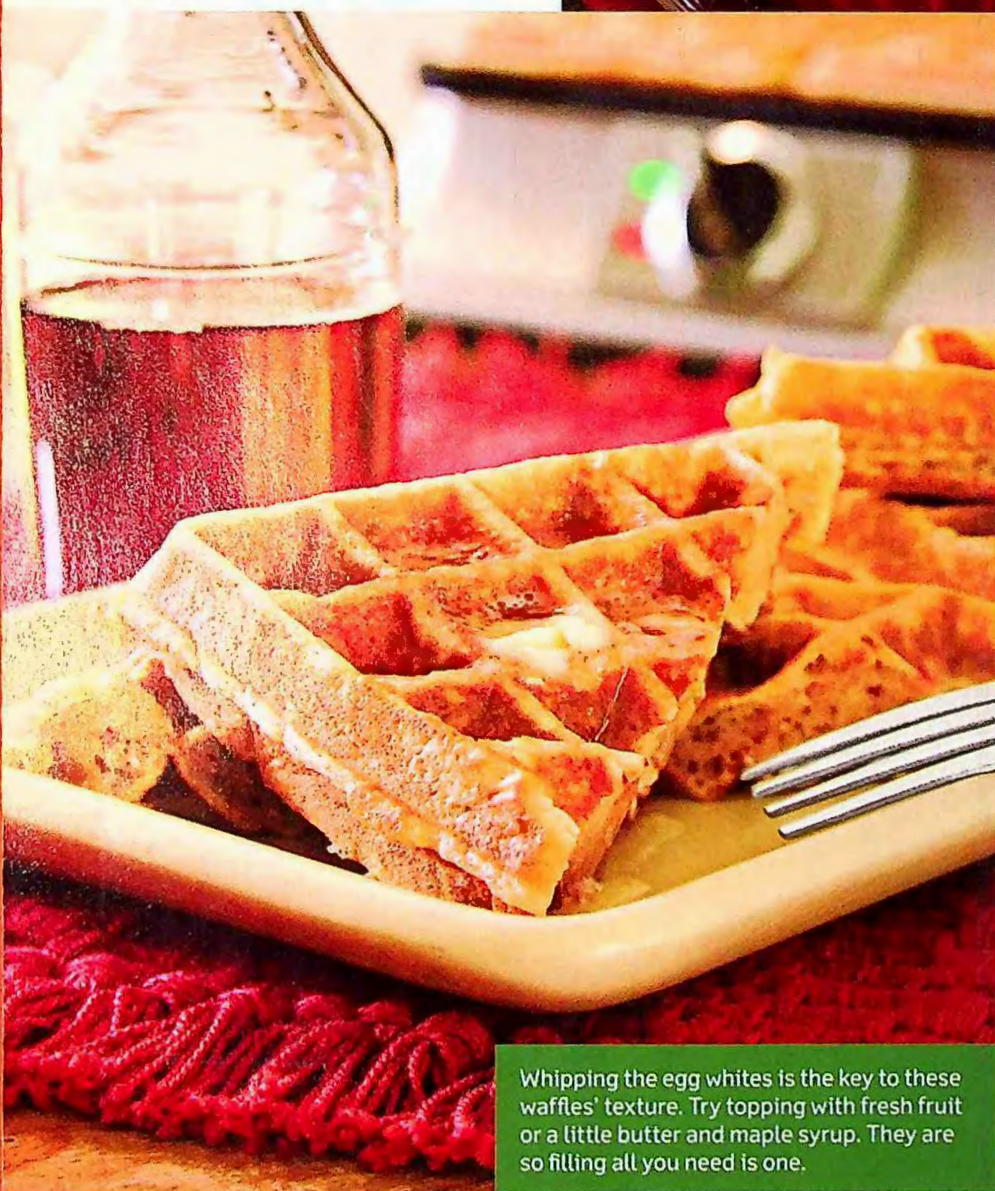
Note: Stir in oats. Cook over low heat, stirring often, 30 minutes or until done. Top with apricots, and serve immediately.

Note: For testing purposes only, we used McCann's Steel-Cut Irish Oatmeal.

Per serving: Calories 279; Fat 4.1g (sat 1.2g, mono 1.2g, poly 1g); Protein 9.9g; Carb 53.1g; Fiber 4.5g; Chol 5mg; Iron 2.7mg; Sodium 191mg; Calc 194mg

Creamy Wheat Cereal: Substitute 1/4 cup uncooked quick-cooking (2 1/2-minute) creamy wheat cereal for 1 cup Irish oats. Proceed with recipe as directed, reducing cook time in Step 3 to 3 to 5 minutes or until done.

Note: For testing purposes only, we used

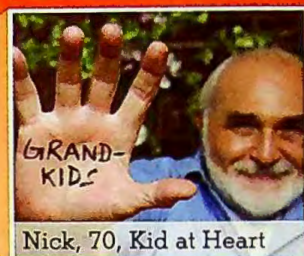


Whipping the egg whites is the key to these waffles' texture. Try topping with fresh fruit or a little butter and maple syrup. They are so filling all you need is one.

The Global Diabetes Handprint: Raise your hand, share your word, tell your story.



Debbie, 51, Optimist



Nick, 70, Kid at Heart

Join the Global
Diabetes Handprint at
diabeteshandprint.com
by sharing what diabetes
means to you.

For every person who joins,
OneTouch will donate \$5
to charity.*



Sean, 9, Future Pro

Tell us your word, join us at
DIABETES HANDPRINT.COM

More power to you.
ONETOUCH



Original (2½-minute) Cream of Wheat.

Per serving: Calories 253; Fat 1.5g (sat 0.8g, mono 0.4g, poly 0.1g); Protein 7.9g; Carb 51.6g; Fiber 1.4g; Chol 5mg; Iron 2.1mg; Sodium 191mg; Calc 179mg

Oatmeal-Honey Waffles

MAKES 8 WAFFLES; PREP: 20 MIN., BAKE: 10 MIN., COOL: 10 MIN., COOK: 15 MIN.

1 cup uncooked regular oats

1½ cups all-purpose flour

1 tsp. baking powder

½ tsp. salt

2 large eggs, separated

1½ cups 1% low-fat milk

4 Tbsp. melted butter

2 Tbsp. honey

Toppings: butter, maple syrup

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Bake oats in a single layer in a shallow pan 10 minutes or until lightly toasted, stirring after 5 minutes. Let cool on a wire rack 10 minutes. Process oats in a blender or food processor 30 seconds or until finely ground.
2. Sift together flour, baking powder, and salt in a large bowl; stir in ground oats.
3. Beat egg whites at high speed with an electric mixer until soft peaks form.
4. Whisk together egg yolks, milk, butter, and honey in a medium bowl; gently stir into oat mixture. Gently fold in egg whites just until blended.
5. Cook batter in a preheated, oiled waffle iron until golden. Serve each waffle with 1 tsp. butter and 1 Tbsp. maple syrup, if desired. ●

Per 1 waffle (including 1 tsp. butter and 1 Tbsp. maple syrup) serving: Calories 312; Fat 12g (sat 6.8g, mono 3.3g, poly 0.9g); Protein 7.1g; Carb 45g; Fiber 1.6g; Chol 72mg; Iron 2.1mg; Sodium 253mg; Calc 122mg

Types of Oats

1. Instant: These whole oat kernels have been precooked, dried, and then rolled. They take very little effort to prepare as they cook with the addition of a hot liquid. Try using low-fat milk with a pinch of cinnamon instead of water to add creaminess and extra flavor. Stir in fresh berries or chopped fruit, and you'll have a tasty, wholesome breakfast in no time.

2. Old-Fashioned: Also called rolled or regular oats, these whole oat kernels are steamed and then flattened with large rollers. No need to be brand specific here; pick one that best fits your budget. They are all made pretty equally. Remember the key to great old-fashioned oatmeal is in the preparation, not the price.

3. Steel-Cut: Also known as Irish oatmeal and Scotch oats, these are whole oat kernels cut into pieces rather than rolled. They have a chewy texture and take longer to cook than old-fashioned oats, but they're well worth the wait. Our Test Kitchens loved the distinctive hearty and chewy texture of McCann's Steel-Cut Irish Oatmeal in Creamy Oatmeal.

Healthy Benefits

- Soluble fiber found in oatmeal and other whole grains has been linked to the prevention of heart disease and its associated risk factors, such as high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure, and obesity. Soluble fiber is thought to help reduce the buildup of plaque within arteries.
- Oats are high in thiamine (vitamin B1), which aids in nerve function and carbohydrate metabolism.

Cassandra. Insulin newbie. Dessert lover.

• "My family, we know pie. Pecan. Apple. Key lime.
• Only now I have half a slice instead of a whole one.
• Checking my blood sugar allows me that."

More power to you.™

ONETOUCH®



For more on Cassandra and her meter, go to www.OneTouchDiabetes.com/Cassandra

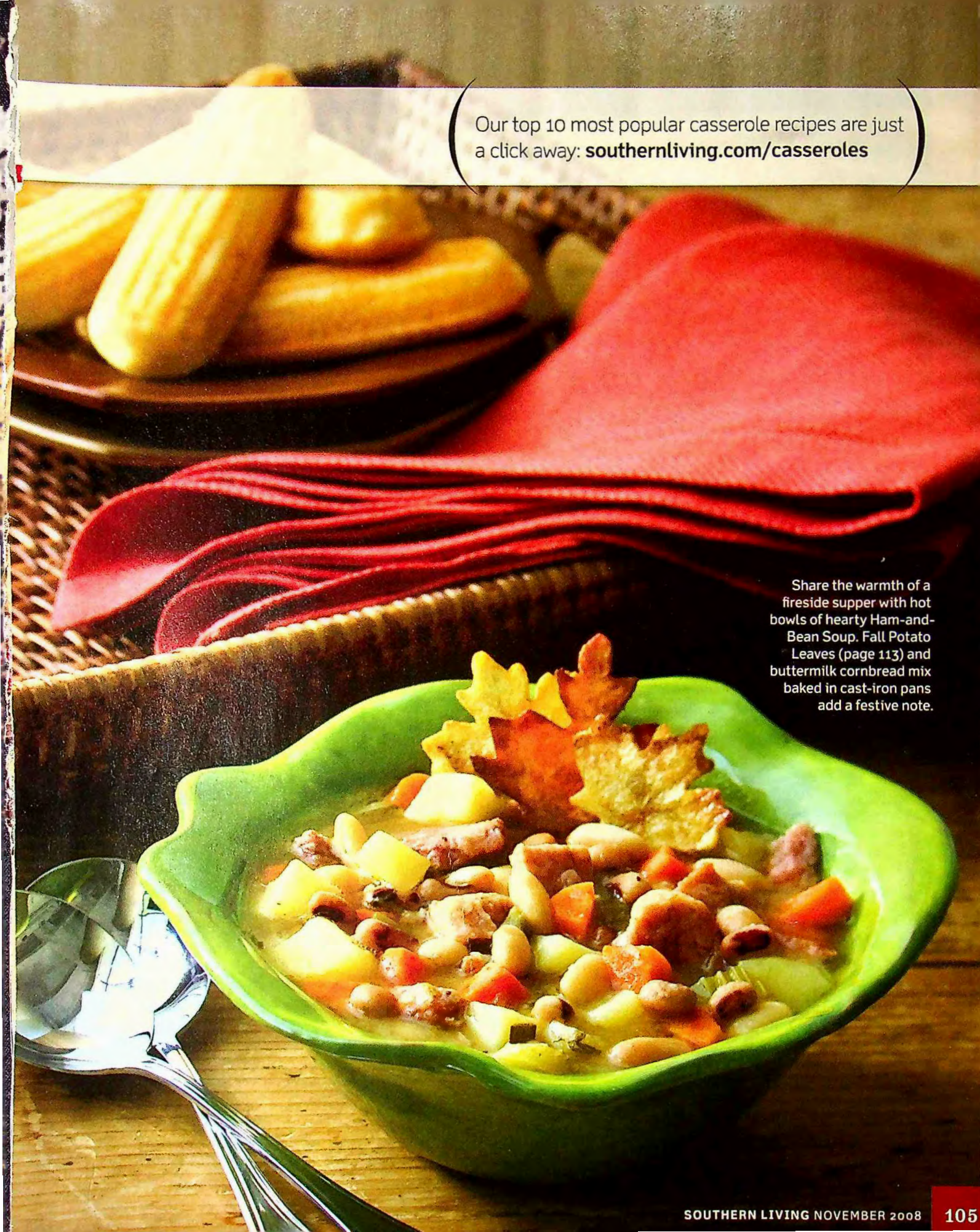
Food



Fix-and-Freeze Favorites

Home-cooked goodness is as close as your freezer with these easy, make-ahead meals. Time-saving shortcuts and simple-to-follow recipes deliver long-simmered flavor with little effort. Prep times are so quick you can make and freeze several meals on a weekend afternoon.

Let the whole family in on the fun. Start with a hands-off slow-cooker recipe, and then roast a double batch of vegetables. Or bake a casserole while you stir up a stove-top stew. Be sure to read "From Our Kitchen" on page 112 for helpful packaging and freezing tips. By **Mary Allen Perry**, photography **Beth Dreiling Hontzas**, styling **Lisa Powell Bailey**, food styling **Pam Lolley**



Our top 10 most popular casserole recipes are just a click away: southernliving.com/casseroles

Share the warmth of a fireside supper with hot bowls of hearty Ham-and-Bean Soup. Fall Potato Leaves (page 113) and buttermilk cornbread mix baked in cast-iron pans add a festive note.



Deceptively rich, low-fat Creamy Slow-cooker Chicken with Roasted Vegetables and Rice combines everything we love about healthy comfort food.

Creamy Slow-cooker Chicken

MAKES 6 SERVINGS, PREP: 10 MIN.;

COOK: 4 HR., 15 MIN.

Pair this versatile low-fat recipe with Roasted Vegetables and Rice, or use in other innovative ways. Shred the cooked chicken, and toss with hot cooked pasta. Create a casserole or jump-start a filling for easy enchiladas or a fast pot pie. Or splurge and spoon this dish over freshly baked biscuits.

6 skinned and boned chicken breasts (about 2½ lb.)

2 tsp. seasoned salt

2 Tbsp. canola oil

1 (10¾-oz.) can reduced-fat cream of mushroom soup

1 (8-oz.) package ⅓-less-fat cream cheese

½ cup dry white wine

1 (0.7-oz.) envelope Italian dressing mix

1 (8-oz.) package sliced fresh mushrooms

1. Sprinkle chicken with seasoned salt. Cook chicken, in batches, in hot oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat 2 to 3 minutes on each side or just until browned. Transfer chicken to a 5-qt. slow cooker, reserving drippings in skillet.
2. Add soup, cream cheese, white wine, and Italian dressing mix to hot drippings in skillet. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, 2 to 3 minutes or until cheese is melted and mixture is smooth.
3. Arrange mushrooms over chicken in

slow cooker. Spoon soup mixture over mushrooms. Cover and cook on LOW 4 hours. Stir well before serving.

—NATALIE PRITCHARD, COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA

Note: For testing purposes only we used Good Seasons Italian All Natural Salad Dressing & Recipe Mix.

To make ahead: Prepare recipe as directed. Transfer to a 13- x 9-inch baking dish, and let cool completely. Freeze up to one month. Thaw in refrigerator 8 to 24 hours. To reheat, cover tightly with aluminum foil, and bake at 325° for 45 minutes. Uncover and bake 15 minutes or until thoroughly heated.

Roasted Vegetables and Rice

MAKES 6 SERVINGS, PREP: 20 MIN.,

BAKE: 40 MIN.

Frozen separately, roasted vegetables also make a colorful addition to soups, stews, and pasta dishes.

1 lb. zucchini, diced

1 lb. yellow squash, diced

1 large sweet onion, diced

1 large red bell pepper, diced

2 Tbsp. olive oil

1 tsp. seasoned salt

½ tsp. freshly ground pepper

2 (8.5-oz.) packages ready-to-serve brown and wild rice mix

½ cup chopped roasted salted almonds

1. Preheat oven to 450°. Toss together first 7 ingredients until vegetables are well

coated. Place vegetables in a single layer in a jelly-roll pan.

2. Bake at 450° for 20 minutes. Stir vegetables, and bake 20 more minutes or until slightly crisp and golden.

3. Prepare rice according to package directions. Stir together rice, almonds, and hot vegetables.

Note: For testing purposes only, we used Uncle Ben's Ready Whole Grain Medley Brown & Wild Rice.

To make ahead: Prepare vegetables as directed through Step 2. Let cool completely. Transfer to airtight containers or heavy-duty zip-top plastic freezer bags, and freeze up to one month. Thaw in refrigerator 8 to 24 hours. Reheat in a large skillet over medium-high heat, stirring often, 5 to 6 minutes or until thoroughly heated and any extra liquid is reduced. Proceed with recipe as directed, or use vegetables as desired.

Ham-and-Bean Soup

MAKES 8 SERVINGS, PREP: 15 MIN.,

COOK: 58 MIN.

This is a great way to use leftover holiday ham. You'll need about 2 cups to replace the ham steak. Don't forget to toss in the bone for added flavor.

1 (16-oz.) lean ham steak

2 Tbsp. olive oil

1 large onion, diced

1 bunch green onions, chopped

2 large carrots, diced

2 celery ribs, diced

1 Tbsp. jarred ham-flavored soup base

½ tsp. pepper

2 (15-oz.) cans navy beans, drained

2 (15-oz.) cans cannellini beans, drained

1 (15½-oz.) can black-eyed peas, drained

4 large Yukon gold potatoes, peeled and diced (about 2 lb.)

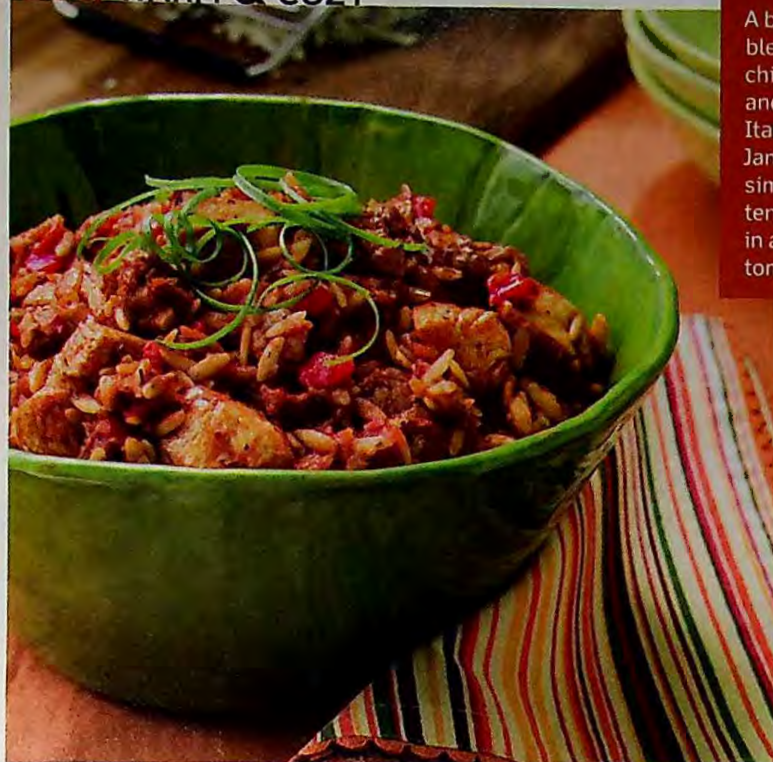
Garnish: Fall Potato Leaves (page 113)

1. Trim fat from ham steak; coarsely chop ham. Reserve bone.
2. Cook ham in hot oil in a Dutch oven over medium-high heat, stirring often, 6 to 8 minutes or until browned. Add diced onion, and next 5 ingredients, and sauté 5 minutes or until onion is tender.
3. Stir in reserved ham bone, navy beans, and next 3 ingredients; add water to cover. Bring to a boil; cover, reduce heat to low, and cook, stirring occasionally,

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45 minutes. Remove and discard bone before serving. Garnish, if desired.

—ANDREA BOLEY, PALM BAY, FLORIDA

Ham-and-Bean Soup With Fresh Spinach

Spinach: Prepare recipe as directed, stirring in 1 (5-oz.) package fresh baby spinach, thoroughly washed, just before serving.

Italian Jambalaya

MAKES 6 TO 8 SERVINGS, PREP: 20 MIN., COOK: 35 MIN.

Orzo pasta replaces rice in this clever twist on a Creole favorite. The sauce is also delicious spooned over hot cooked spaghetti. Depending on the level of heat you prefer, use mild or regular tomatoes with green chiles or a can of each.

- 1 lb. Italian sausage, casings removed
- 2 skinned and boned chicken breasts, coarsely chopped (about 1 lb.)
- 2 boneless center-cut pork chops, chopped (about 1 lb.)
- 1 (10-oz.) package frozen diced onion, red and green bell peppers, and celery
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 Tbsp. dried Italian seasoning
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. pepper
- 2 (10-oz.) cans diced tomatoes and green chiles

- 1 (6-oz.) can tomato paste
- Hot cooked orzo or other pasta (about 8 oz., uncooked)
- Garnishes: thinly sliced green onions, shredded Parmesan cheese

1. Brown Italian sausage in a Dutch oven over medium-high heat, stirring often, 5 minutes or until sausage crumbles and is no longer pink. Remove sausage from Dutch oven using a slotted spoon, reserving drippings in Dutch oven.
2. Cook chicken and pork in hot drippings in Dutch oven over medium-high heat, stirring often, 4 to 5 minutes or until browned on all sides. Add frozen onion mixture and next 4 ingredients, and sauté 5 minutes. Stir in diced tomatoes and green chiles, tomato paste, 1/4 cup water,

and Italian sausage; cover, reduce heat to low, and cook, stirring often, 20 minutes.

3. Stir hot cooked orzo into jambalaya just before serving, or serve over hot cooked pasta. Garnish, if desired.

—JAMES D. WHITE, GULFPORT, MISSISSIPPI

Pork Chili Stew

MAKES 6 SERVINGS, PREP: 10 MIN., COOK: 45 MIN.

Off-the-shelf ingredients make this crowd-pleasing dish a snap to prepare. Serve with your favorite taco toppings, and let guests help themselves.

- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 3 Tbsp. chili powder
- 2 tsp. salt
- 1 1/2 tsp. ground cumin
- 2 lb. boneless pork loin, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 2 Tbsp. canola oil
- 1 large onion, diced
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 (16-oz.) cans kidney beans, undrained
- 2 (16-oz.) cans whole kernel white corn, drained
- 2 (10-oz.) cans diced tomatoes and green chiles with lime juice and cilantro, undrained
- 2 (4.5-oz.) cans chopped green chiles, undrained

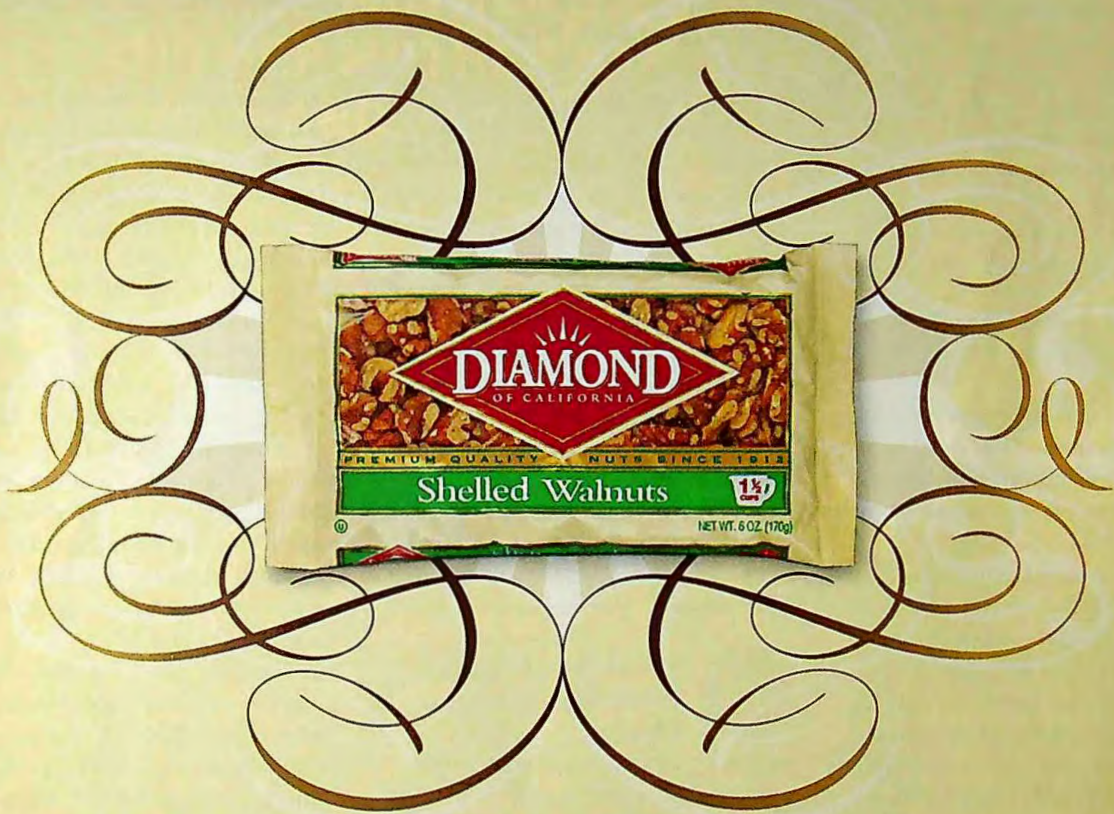
1. Stir together first 4 ingredients. Reserve 2 Tbsp. flour mixture. Dredge pork in remaining flour mixture.
2. Cook pork in hot oil in a Dutch oven over medium-high heat, stirring often, 8 to 10 minutes or until browned. Add onion and garlic, and sauté 5 minutes.
3. Stir in kidney beans and next 3 ingredients, and bring to a boil. Sprinkle with reserved 2 Tbsp. flour mixture, and stir until blended. Cover, reduce heat to low, and cook, stirring occasionally, 30 minutes. ● —TONYA LLOYD, BASTROP, TEXAS

Freezing Soups, Stews, and Sauces

Prepare recipe as directed. Let cool completely, using one of the two methods below. Cooling times will vary, but package and freeze food promptly—as soon as it reaches room temperature. Transfer to airtight containers or zip-top plastic freezer bags, and freeze up to one month. Thaw in the refrigerator 8 to 24 hours.

- Place the stockpot or Dutch oven in a sink with ice water. (To ensure rapid cooling, fill the sink with ice water to the same level as the food in your stockpot, and add more ice as needed.) Let stand, uncovered, stirring often, until completely cool.
- Transfer hot food to large, shallow containers (such as 13- x 9-inch baking dishes). Let stand, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until completely cool.

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Show-off Sweets

Treat yourself and your guests to sensational, homemade desserts, without spending hours in the kitchen. Serve up these recipes in 45 minutes or less. By **Marion McGahey**

total time
41
minutes

Mocha Java Cakes

MAKES 6 SERVINGS; PREP: 15 MIN.,

BAKE: 16 MIN., STAND: 10 MIN.

Even the cook will have a hard time believing these take less than 45 minutes to assemble and bake.

- 1 Tbsp. butter
- 1 cup butter
- 8 oz. bittersweet chocolate morsels
- 4 egg yolks
- 4 large eggs
- 2 cups powdered sugar
- 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. instant espresso or instant coffee granules
- Pinch of salt
- Garnish: powdered sugar

1. Preheat oven to 425°. Grease 6 (6-oz.) ramekins or individual soufflé dishes with 1 Tbsp. butter.
2. Microwave 1 cup butter and chocolate morsels in a microwave-safe bowl at HIGH 2 minutes or until chocolate is melted and mixture is smooth, whisking at 1-minute intervals.
3. Beat egg yolks and eggs at medium speed with an electric mixer 1 minute. Gradually add chocolate mixture, beating at low speed until well blended.
4. Sift together sugar and next 3 ingredients. Gradually whisk sugar mixture into chocolate mixture until well blended. Divide batter among prepared ramekins. Place ramekins in a 15- x 10-inch jelly-roll pan.
5. Bake at 425° for 16 minutes or until a thermometer inserted into cakes registers 165°. Remove from oven, and let stand 10 minutes. Run a knife around outer edge of each cake to loosen. Carefully invert cakes onto dessert plates. Garnish, if desired.

Note: For testing purposes only, we used Ghirardelli 60% Cacao Bittersweet Chocolate Chips.

Coffee Liqueur Java Cakes: Omit instant espresso. Prepare recipe as directed

through Step 3. Sift together sugar, flour, and salt. Gradually whisk sugar mixture into chocolate mixture until well blended. Whisk in 1/4 cup coffee liqueur. Proceed with recipe as directed, baking cakes 14 to 16 minutes or until a thermometer inserted into cakes registers 165°.

Note: For testing purposes only, we used Kahlúa for coffee liqueur.

Orange Java Cakes: Prepare recipe as directed through Step 3. Sift together sugar and next 3 ingredients. Gradually whisk sugar mixture into chocolate mixture until well blended. Whisk in 1/4 cup orange liqueur and 1 tsp. orange zest. Proceed with recipe as directed, baking cakes 14 to 16 minutes or until a thermometer inserted into cakes registers 165°.

Note: For testing purposes only, we used Grand Marnier for orange liqueur.

Minty Mocha Java Cakes: Prepare recipe as directed through Step 4. Chop 12 thin crème de menthe chocolate mints. Sprinkle center of batter in ramekins with chopped mints. Press mints into batter gently just until submerged. Proceed with recipe as directed.

Note: For testing purposes only, we used Andes Crème de Menthe Thins.

total time
42
minutes

Fresh Fruit Tart With Mascarpone Cheese

MAKES 6 TO 8 SERVINGS; PREP: 15 MIN.,

BAKE: 12 MIN., COOL: 15 MIN.

- 2 (8-oz.) packages mascarpone cheese, softened
- 1/2 cup powdered sugar
- 1 tsp. lemon zest
- 1 tsp. lemon juice
- 1/2 (15-oz.) package refrigerated piecrusts
- 5 kiwifruit, peeled and sliced
- 1 cup fresh raspberries
- 1/4 cup apricot jam*

1. Preheat oven to 450°. Whisk together mascarpone cheese and next 3 ingredients



It's what's inside that counts. The oozing, warm chocolate centers of Mocha Java Cakes make this decadent dessert irresistible.

in a medium bowl. Cover and chill.

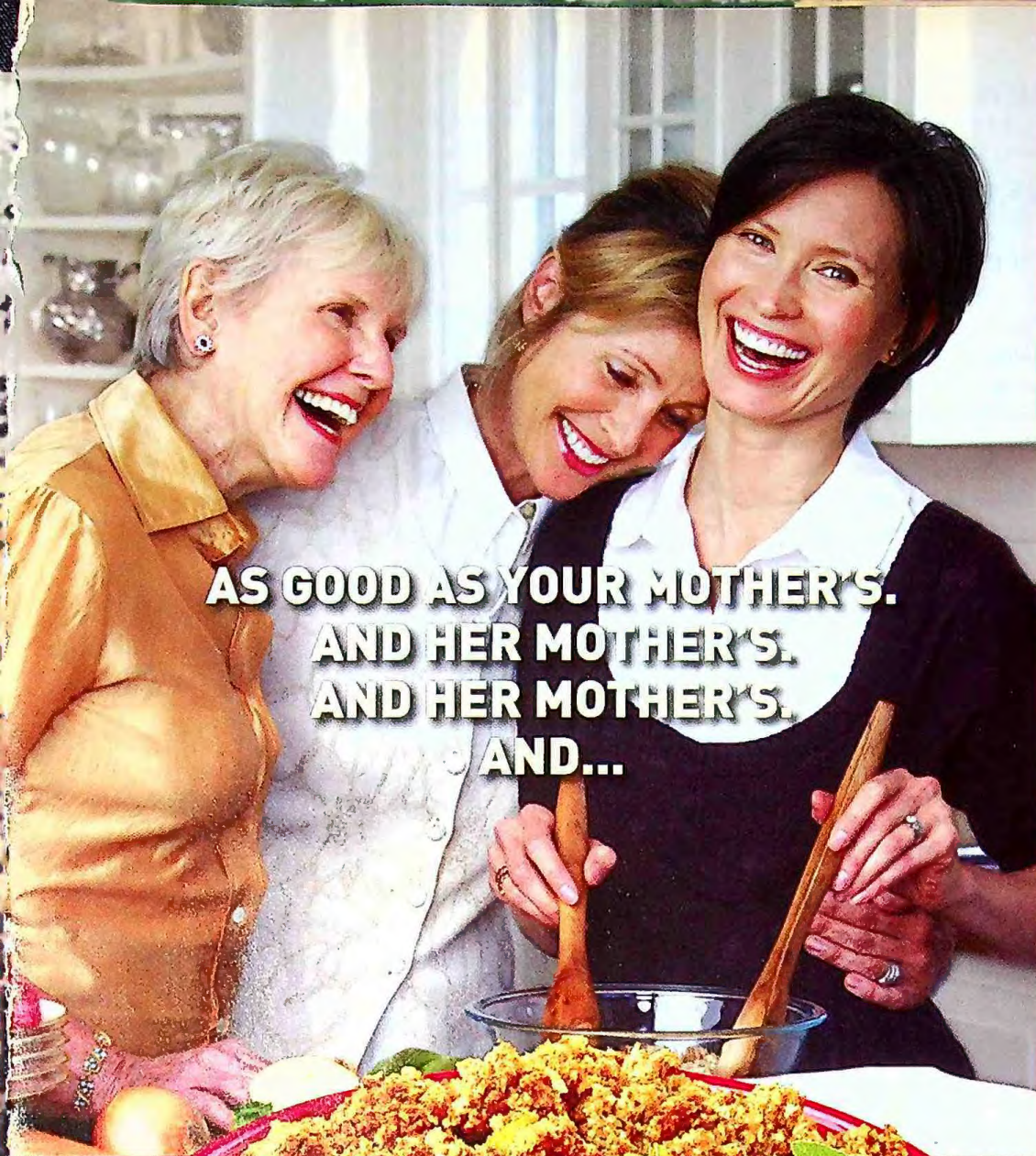
2. Meanwhile, fit piecrust into a 9-inch tart pan with removable bottom; press into fluted edges. Fold any excess dough over outside of pan, and pinch to secure to pan. (This will keep piecrust from sliding down pan as it bakes.) Line crust with aluminum foil, and fill with pie weights or dried beans.
3. Bake at 450° for 8 minutes. Remove weights and foil, and bake 3 to 4 more minutes or until golden brown. Remove from oven to a wire rack, and cool completely (about 15 minutes). Gently tap excess crust from sides of pan, using a rolling pin.
4. Spoon mascarpone mixture into cooled tart shell, spreading to edges. Arrange kiwifruit around outer edge of tart; place raspberries in center.
5. Combine apricot jam and 1 Tbsp. water in a small microwave-safe glass dish. Microwave at HIGH 25 seconds. Stir until well blended. Pour apricot mixture through a fine wire-mesh strainer into a bowl; discard solids. Brush fruit in tart with apricot mixture. Serve immediately.

—INSPIRED BY AMY ELIZABETH REX, ALPHARETTA, GEORGIA

*Apple jelly may be substituted. Decrease water to 2 tsp. in Step 5 and do not strain jelly mixture after heating.

Cheesecake-Filled Fresh Fruit Tart:

Substitute 2 cups ready-to-eat cheesecake filling for mascarpone cheese. Increase lemon juice to 2 tsp. Proceed with recipe as directed. ●



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Bake: 30 minutes

Makes: 11 servings

2 1/2 cups Swanson Chicken Broth
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Generous dash ground black
pepper

2 stalks celery, coarsely chopped

1 large onion, coarsely chopped

1 pkg. (16 ounce) Pepperidge Farm®
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1. Heat the broth, black pepper, celery and onion in a 3-quart saucepan over medium-high heat to a boil. Reduce heat to low. Cover and cook 5 minutes or until the vegetables are tender. Add stuffing and mix lightly.

2. Spoon the stuffing mixture into a greased 3-quart casserole dish. Cover and bake at 350°F. 30 minutes or until hot.



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Frozen Assets

Tips, tricks, and cool ideas for easy freezing. By **Mary Allen Perry**

Freezer FYI

- Keep your freezer at 0°. Use a freezer thermometer, and adjust the temperature dial if needed. Always cool food to room temp before freezing. When freezing several items at a time, place in a single layer in the coldest part of the freezer, leaving plenty of space for air circulation.
- Label and date containers, and include baking or reheating instructions. (It's easier to write on freezer bags before you fill them.) Keep a list of what's on hand.
- Use airtight, moisture-proof containers and wrapping materials that are specifically designed for freezer use. Choose a container that fits the amount of food you're freezing. Soups and other liquids expand when frozen, so leave a ¼ to ½ inch headspace below the rim of the container.
- Vacuum packing foods is the best way to prevent freezer burn. To shrink-wrap foods in freezer bags without a vacuum sealer, press out as much air as possible. Close the bag, leaving a ½-inch opening. Insert a drinking straw through the opening and suck out any remaining air until the bag shrinks around the food. Quickly slip out straw and seal the bag completely.
- Check the directions on zip-top plastic freezer bags and wrapping materials for guidelines on microwave use. They may be recommended for defrosting foods but not for reheating at a higher level of power.
- Some frozen foods can be heated without thawing, but make sure the container is rated freezer-to-oven safe by the manufacturer.



Home-Cooked Convenience Freeze family-size portions of soups, stews, and sauces in empty cereal boxes for space-saving stackable storage. Line a box with a large zip-top plastic freezer bag, folding the edges of the bag over the edges of the box (the way you would place a liner in a trash can), so that the box supports the bag when filled. Seal the bag, and freeze vertically while still inside the box. Once frozen, remove the filled bag from the box and stack horizontally. Downsize to smaller freezer bags and boxes for fewer servings.



The Dish on Casseroles

Everyone loves a good casserole, and this little trick lets you stock the freezer without tying up your dishes. Line the bottom and sides of a casserole dish with heavy-duty aluminum foil, allowing 2 to 3 inches to extend over sides; fill with prepared recipe. Cover and freeze two to three hours or until firm. Lift the frozen casserole from the dish, using the foil sides as handles, and freeze in a zip-top plastic freezer bag. You'll need an extra-large 2-gallon bag for 13- x 9-inch baking dishes and a 1-gallon bag for 9-inch square baking dishes.

To serve, remove foil from frozen casserole and return to original baking dish; cover and let thaw in the refrigerator (allow 24 to 48 hours). Let stand 30 minutes at room temperature, and bake as directed.



Festive Trimmings The decorative leaves that top our Ham-and-Bean Soup on page 104 are cut from thinly sliced Yukon gold and sweet potatoes. We also use them as a garnish for seasonal casseroles and side dishes. Sprinkled with sugar instead of salt, sweet potato leaves make a colorful addition to holiday cakes and pies.



Fall Potato Leaves

MAKES ABOUT 20 LEAVES; PREP: 15 MIN., COOK: 2 MIN. PER BATCH

1 large sweet potato (about 12 oz.)

1 large Yukon gold potato (about 8 oz.)

1/2 cup canola oil

Kosher salt to taste

1. Cut potatoes into 1/8-inch-thick slices, placing slices in a large bowl of ice water as you work to prevent discoloration.
2. Cut potato slices into leaves, using assorted 2- to 3-inch leaf-shaped cutters. Return leaves to ice water until ready to use.
3. Drain potato leaves, and dry well with paper towels. Cook potato leaves, in batches, in hot oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat 1 minute on each side or until golden brown. Season with salt to taste.

Note: To make ahead, prepare recipe as directed; place cooked leaves in a single layer in a jelly-roll pan. Freeze on pan until firm, and transfer to a zip-top plastic freezer bag. To reheat, place leaves in a single layer on a lightly greased baking sheet. Preheat oven to 350°, and bake 8 to 10 minutes or until thoroughly heated. •

What's Cooking? What's your favorite fix-and-freeze recipe? We'd love to try it. For each recipe we publish, we'll send you \$20, plus a copy of *Southern Living Annual Recipes* cookbook in January. Please e-mail recipes to sl_foodedit@timeinc.com.

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Taste a New Tradition

A sparkling bowl of jewel-colored cranberry sauce is an absolute must for the holiday table. Simple to make, this sophisticated twist tops our list of gourmet gift ideas. Fill a jar, tie on a ribbon, and add a decorative label with storage instructions. By **Mary Allen Perry**

Grandma Erma's Spirited Cranberry Sauce

MAKES ABOUT 3½ CUPS; **PREP:** 5 MIN., **COOK:** 10 MIN., **COOL:** 15 MIN., **CHILL:** 8 HR. *You'll need about 1 lb. of cranberries. Most are sold in 12-oz. bags, so pick up two and freeze the extra.*

2 cups sugar
½ cup port
4 cups fresh cranberries
¼ cup orange liqueur

1. Stir together sugar, port, and ¼ cup water in a heavy 3-qt. saucepan until

blended. Add cranberries; bring to a boil, and cook over medium-high heat, stirring often, 8 to 10 minutes or until cranberry skins begin to split. Remove from heat, and let cool 15 minutes.

2. Pulse cranberry mixture in a food processor 3 to 4 times or until cranberries are almost pureed; stir in orange liqueur. Cover and chill 8 hours before serving. Store in refrigerator in an airtight container up to 2 weeks. Serve chilled or at room temperature.

—LESLIE SUTHERLAND, FORT WORTH, TEXAS

Note: For testing purposes only, we used

Grand Marnier for orange liqueur.

Turkey Tenderloins With Cranberry Sauce: Preheat oven to 400°. Sprinkle 1½ lb. turkey tenderloins with 1 tsp. each salt and freshly ground pepper. Place tenderloins in a lightly greased 15- x 10-inch jelly-roll pan. Bake 20 to 25 minutes or until a meat thermometer inserted into thickest portion registers 170°. Brush tenderloins with Grandma Erma's Spirited Cranberry Sauce. Garnish with fresh sage or rosemary and currants, if desired. Makes 4 servings. Prep: 10 min., Bake: 25 min. ●

Port wine and orange liqueur are the secret ingredients in Grandma Erma's Spirited Cranberry Sauce. Don't limit it to turkey—try the sauce on sandwiches or spread over a warm round of Brie.

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Green Bean Casserole: Three Ways

We have turned this holiday standard into something new and special. These recipes are quick and tasty. By **Shirley Harrington**

Buttermilk White Sauce

MAKES ABOUT 2 CUPS; **PREP:** 10 MIN.,
COOK: 5 MIN.

Measure the flour as you would for baking by lightly spooning it into a measuring cup and leveling with the back of a knife. This will help you avoid a thick, pasty sauce. Don't try to add both milk and buttermilk at one time—the sauce will curdle.

2 Tbsp. butter
1/4 cup all-purpose flour
1 1/2 cups milk
1/2 cup buttermilk
1 Tbsp. Ranch dressing mix
1/4 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper

1. Melt butter in a medium-size heavy saucepan over medium heat; whisk in flour until smooth. Cook 1 minute, whisking constantly. Gradually whisk in 1 1/2 cups milk; cook over medium heat, whisking constantly, 3 to 4 minutes or until mixture is thickened and bubbly. Remove from heat, and whisk in buttermilk and remaining ingredients. —INSPIRED BY HAZEL KING, LUFKIN, TEXAS

Note: Sauce can be made up to two days ahead. Prepare recipe as directed; cover and chill in an airtight container. Whisk in 2 Tbsp. milk, and microwave at HIGH 1 minute, stirring at 30-second intervals.

Simple Blanched Green Beans

MAKES 6 TO 8 SERVINGS; **PREP:** 10 MIN.,
COOK: 6 MIN.

Cook 1 1/2 lb. fresh green beans, trimmed, in boiling salted water to cover 4 to 6 minutes or to desired degree of doneness; drain. Use immediately, or plunge into ice water to stop the cooking process; drain and pat dry. Store in a zip-top plastic bag in refrigerator up to 2 days.

Basic Green Bean Casserole

MAKES 6 TO 8 SERVINGS; **PREP:** 10 MIN.,
BAKE: 30 MIN.

We found mixing Japanese breadcrumbs (panko) and French fried onions made for a crisp, less greasy topping. You can find panko with other breadcrumbs on the baking aisle or on the ethnic foods aisle. This dish is delightful with any simple grilled or roasted meat, poultry, or pork.

Buttermilk White Sauce
Simple Blanched Green Beans
1 cup French fried onions, crushed
1/2 cup Japanese breadcrumbs (panko)

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Stir together white sauce and green beans. Place mixture in a lightly greased 13- x 9-inch or 3-qt. baking dish.
2. Combine French fried onions and breadcrumbs. Sprinkle over green bean mixture.
3. Bake at 350° for 25 to 30 minutes or until golden brown and bubbly. Serve immediately.

Note: For testing purposes only, we used French's French Fried Onions.

Cheddar-Pecan Green Bean Casserole

MAKES 6 TO 8 SERVINGS; **PREP:** 10 MIN.,
BAKE: 30 MIN.

We suggest you shred the Cheddar cheese yourself for smooth and even melting.

Buttermilk White Sauce
1 cup finely chopped jarred roasted red bell peppers
1 cup (4 oz.) freshly shredded sharp Cheddar cheese, divided
Simple Blanched Green Beans
1 cup French fried onions, crushed
1/2 cup Japanese breadcrumbs (panko)
1/2 cup chopped pecans



Take your pick of these green bean casserole recipes, all crowned with French fried onion toppings that are crisp and flavorful. This one, Cheddar-Pecan Green Bean Casserole, goes great with roasted pork loin or pork tenderloin; grilled, thick pork chops; and roasted, fried, or smoked turkey.

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Combine Buttermilk White Sauce, peppers, and 1/2 cup cheese in a large bowl; add green beans, tossing gently to combine. Place in a lightly greased 13- x 9-inch or 3-qt. baking dish.
2. Combine French fried onions, Japanese breadcrumbs, chopped pecans, and remaining 1/2 cup cheese, and sprinkle over green bean mixture.
3. Bake at 350° for 25 to 30 minutes or until golden brown and bubbly. Serve immediately.

Simple Pecan-Green Bean Casserole:

Omit shredded sharp Cheddar cheese. Preheat oven to 350°. Place French fried onions, Japanese breadcrumbs, and chopped pecans in an even layer in a 15- x 10-inch jelly-roll pan. Bake 8 to 10 minutes or until toasted, stirring after 5 minutes. Prepare Buttermilk White Sauce and Simple Blanched Green Beans as directed. (Do not plunge beans into ice water.) Gently toss together green beans and roasted red bell peppers, and spoon onto a serving platter. Top with Buttermilk White Sauce, and sprinkle with toasted pecan mixture. Makes 6 to 8 servings; Prep: 10 min., Bake: 10 min. ●

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and Cheese

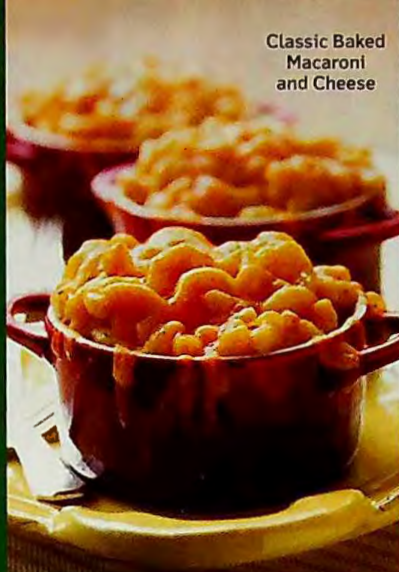


Fig-Balsamic
Roasted Pork Loin



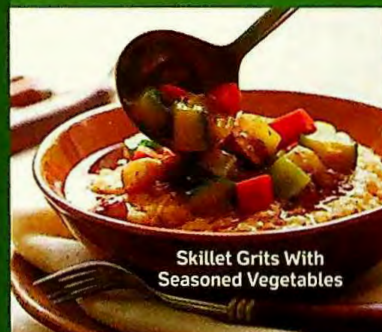
Black-Bottom Pecan
Cheesecake
Pie



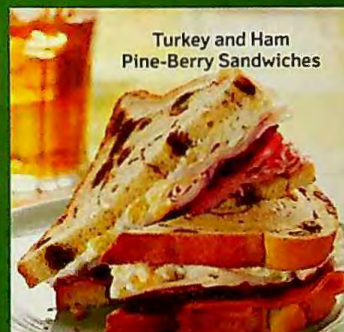
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Skillet Grits With
Seasoned Vegetables



Turkey and Ham
Pine-Berry Sandwiches



Mediterranean
Salmon With
White Beans

Salads To Rave About

A few finishing touches bring these festive salads to the table in style. Little extras, rather than tricky techniques, make them special. It's all too easy, all too fun. By **Mary Allen Perry**

Savory Blue Cheesecakes With Waldorf Salad

MAKES 12 SERVINGS; **PREP:** 20 MIN.,
BAKE: 7 MIN.

- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts
 - 1 large Gala apple, diced
 - 1 large Granny Smith apple, diced
 - 2 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
 - 2 celery ribs, finely chopped
 - 1/2 cup golden raisins
 - 1 (11.5-oz.) bottle refrigerated blue cheese vinaigrette, divided
 - 2 (5-oz.) packages spring mix, thoroughly washed
- Savory Blue Cheesecakes

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Bake walnuts in a single layer in a shallow pan 5 to 7 minutes or until lightly toasted and fragrant.
2. Toss diced apples with lemon juice in a medium bowl; add walnuts, celery, raisins, and 1/2 cup vinaigrette, stirring to coat.
3. Divide greens among 12 salad plates; place 1 Savory Blue Cheesecake over greens on each plate. Spoon about 1/2 cup apple mixture over each cheesecake. Serve with remaining vinaigrette.

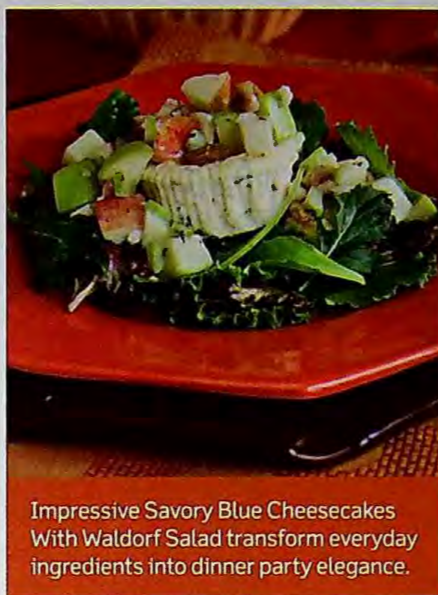
Note: For testing purposes only, we used Marie's Blue Cheese Vinaigrette.

Savory Blue Cheesecakes:

MAKES 12 SERVINGS; **PREP:** 10 MIN.,
BAKE: 40 MIN., **COOL:** 30 MIN., **CHILL:** 4 HR.,
FREEZE: 30 MIN.

- 12 paper baking cups
- Vegetable cooking spray
- 2 (8-oz.) packages cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1 (4-oz.) package crumbled blue cheese
- 1 Tbsp. all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp. dried parsley flakes
- 1/2 tsp. dried marjoram
- 1/4 tsp. granulated garlic
- 2 large eggs

1. Preheat oven to 325°. Place 12 paper baking cups in a muffin pan, and coat with cooking spray.



Impressive Savory Blue Cheesecakes With Waldorf Salad transform everyday ingredients into dinner party elegance.

2. Beat cream cheese and next 6 ingredients at medium speed with an electric mixer until blended. Add eggs, 1 at a time, beating just until yellow disappears after each addition. Spoon cream cheese mixture into prepared baking cups, filling completely full.
3. Bake at 325° for 40 minutes or until set. Let cool in pan on a wire rack 15 minutes. Remove from pan to wire rack, and let cool completely (about 15 minutes). Cover and chill 4 hours. Freeze 15 to 30 minutes or until cheesecakes can be easily removed from baking cups. Remove and discard baking cups. —TRACIE NEWLIN, TUCKER, GEORGIA

Grilled Pork Tenderloin Salad With Roasted Sweet Potatoes

MAKES 6 SERVINGS; **PREP:** 30 MIN.,
BAKE: 25 MIN., **GRILL:** 24 MIN.,
STAND: 10 MIN.

- 3 small sweet potatoes (about 1 1/2 lb.)
- 2 tsp. olive oil
- 1/2 tsp. ground allspice
- 1/4 tsp. ground red pepper
- 1 1/2 tsp. salt, divided

- 1 (2-lb.) package pork tenderloin
- 1/2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 8 cups gourmet mixed salad greens
- 1 (4-oz.) package crumbled feta cheese
- 1/2 small red onion, halved and sliced
- 3/4 cup sweetened dried cranberries
- 1/2 cup sliced honey-roasted almonds
- Raspberry Salad Dressing

1. Preheat oven to 450°. Peel sweet potatoes, and cut into 1/2-inch-thick wedges; toss with oil, allspice, red pepper, and 1/2 tsp. salt. Arrange potato wedges in a single layer on a lightly greased jelly-roll pan.
 2. Bake at 450° on an oven rack one-third up from bottom of oven 10 minutes; turn potatoes, and bake 10 to 15 minutes or until crisp-tender. Remove from oven, and let cool.
 3. Preheat grill to 350° to 400° (medium-high). Sprinkle pork with 1/2 tsp. black pepper and remaining 1 tsp. salt. Grill pork, covered with grill lid, 6 to 8 minutes on all sides or until a meat thermometer inserted into thickest portion registers 150° to 155°. Remove pork from grill, and let stand 10 minutes. Cut diagonally into 1/2-inch-thick slices.
 4. Toss together greens and next 4 ingredients in a large bowl; transfer to a serving platter, and top with sliced pork and sweet potatoes. Serve with Raspberry Salad Dressing. —KATHY HUDSON, JONESTOWN, TEXAS
- Note:** For testing purposes only, we used Sunkist Almond Accents Honey Roasted Flavored Sliced Almonds.

Raspberry Salad Dressing:

MAKES ABOUT 3/4 CUP; **PREP:** 5 MIN.

- 1/4 cup white wine vinegar
- 2 Tbsp. raspberry preserves
- 1 Tbsp. honey
- 1/2 cup olive oil

1. Whisk together first 3 ingredients in a bowl until blended. Add olive oil in a slow, steady stream, whisking constantly until blended. ●

CINQUE TERRE — VERNAZZA



NO. 13



LINGUINE



IT'S NOT HOW MANY STARS YOU SEE ON THE DOOR—
it's how many locals you see walking through it.



The smell of simmering garlic permeated the air as we wandered the winding streets and terra cotta buildings of Vernazza. A fork in the road led us to the kitchen door of a small restaurant where I caught a glimpse of the chef at work. Between the cutting boards and ingredients, I noticed the familiar blue box of Barilla pasta.

Barilla Linguine with pesto and green beans

Ingredients

Barilla Linguine	1 box
Potatoes	2 cups, diced
Fresh green beans	½ pound
Fresh basil	1 cup
Extra virgin olive oil	6 Tbsp
Pine nuts	2 Tbsp
Garlic	1 clove
Pecorino cheese	1 Tbsp, grated
Parmesan cheese	2 Tbsp, grated
Salt & black pepper	to taste



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A combination of fresh lemon juice and buttery garlic sauce pumps up the flavor in our super-easy Shrimp Scampi.



Shrimp Scampi

Capture the essence of a classic Italian-style dish in 30 minutes.
By **Natalie Kelly Brown**

In my house, the fewer pans I use, the happier I make my daughter, who “gets” to wash them. She’s sure to love our easy-to-prepare Shrimp Scampi, which delivers hearty goodness with just two pans. To further shorten your shopping list, we’ve used the same seasoning blend in both recipes. For a tasty side dish, microwave a bag of frozen vegetables, or toss a mixed green salad while the pasta is boiling. Serve with warm and crusty Cheesy Garlic Bread, and you’re ready for a filling family meal.

Shrimp Scampi

MAKES 4 SERVINGS; PREP: 20 MIN., COOK: 10 MIN.

- 1 lb. peeled, large raw shrimp (31/35 count)
- 1 (12-oz.) package angel hair pasta
- ½ cup butter
- ¼ cup finely chopped onion
- 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 tsp. salt-free Italian-herb seasoning
- 1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- ¼ cup freshly grated Romano or Parmesan cheese
- 1 Tbsp. chopped fresh parsley

1. Devein shrimp, if desired.

2. Prepare angel hair pasta according to package directions.
3. Meanwhile, melt butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat; add onion and garlic, and sauté 3 to 5 minutes or until tender. Stir in Italian-herb seasoning and Worcestershire sauce.
4. Reduce heat to medium. Add shrimp, and cook, stirring occasionally, 3 to 5 minutes or just until shrimp turn pink. Stir in lemon juice. Toss shrimp mixture with pasta, and sprinkle with cheese and parsley. Serve immediately.

—INSPIRED BY DOREEN SIDOR, ROANOKE, VIRGINIA

Note: For testing purposes only, we used Mrs. Dash Italian Medley Seasoning Blend. In the Test Kitchens, we prefer Wild American Shrimp for better flavor.

Cheesy Garlic Bread

MAKES 6 SERVINGS; PREP: 10 MIN., BAKE: 7 MIN.

- 1 (12-oz.) French bread loaf
- 3 garlic cloves, peeled*
- Pinch of salt
- 1 cup (4 oz.) shredded Italian six-cheese blend
- ¼ cup butter, softened
- 1 tsp. salt-free Italian-herb seasoning

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Cut bread diagonally into slices.
 2. Place peeled garlic cloves on cutting board with salt. Smash garlic and salt together using flat side of a knife to make a paste.
 3. Stir together garlic paste, cheese, butter, and Italian-herb seasoning. Spread butter mixture on 1 side of each bread slice. Place bread on a baking sheet.
 4. Bake at 350° for 5 to 7 minutes or until golden and cheese is melted.
- *1½ tsp. jarred minced garlic may be substituted. Omit salt, and stir minced garlic together with cheese, butter, and seasoning in Step 3.

Note: For testing purposes only, we used Mrs. Dash Italian Medley Seasoning Blend. ●

Delta Roasted Turkey With Million-Dollar Gravy

MAKES 8 TO 10 SERVINGS; **PREP:** 30 MIN.;

SOAK: 15 MIN.; **BAKE:** 3 HR., 30 MIN.;

STAND: 20 MIN.

Cheesecloth

3½ cups low-sodium chicken broth, divided

5 thick hickory-smoked bacon slices

½ cup butter, softened

2 tsp. salt

2 tsp. pepper

1 (14-lb.) whole fresh or frozen turkey, thawed

Kitchen string

2 cups dry white wine

2 bay leaves

6 black peppercorns

4 fresh thyme sprigs

4 fresh parsley sprigs

1 cup butter

3 Tbsp. all-purpose flour

2 Tbsp. butter, softened

1. Cut cheesecloth into a 3- x 3-ft. square. (Cheesecloth should be large enough to wrap around entire turkey.) Soak cheesecloth in 1 cup broth 15 minutes. Wring out cheesecloth, discarding excess broth. Lay cheesecloth on top of a roasting rack in a roasting pan. Place bacon in center of cheesecloth.

2. Preheat oven to 500°. Combine ½ cup softened butter, salt, and pepper. Remove giblets and neck from turkey, and pat turkey dry with paper towels. Loosen and lift skin from turkey breast with fingers, without totally detaching skin; rub about one-third of butter mixture underneath skin. Carefully replace skin, and rub remaining

"My grandmother served this turkey every Thanksgiving and Christmas, so I continue the tradition with my family. I haven't changed a thing," says Elizabeth Heiskell of Cleveland, Mississippi.



Ultimate Holidays

Get ready to celebrate, Southern style! Our annual special section offers fantastic recipes that will make your parties the talk of the town. The cornerstone dish for the holiday meal is turkey, and we've found a real winner in Delta Roasted Turkey. Its unusual method, which comes to us from reader Elizabeth Heiskell, produces a crisp exterior with incredibly juicy meat.



Pecan-Ginger-Sweet Potato Cups are a sensational update to the venerable Southern side and the perfect match for Delta Roasted Turkey.

butter mixture over outside of turkey. Tie ends of legs together with kitchen string; tuck wingtips under. Place turkey, breast side down, on top of bacon in roasting pan. Lift sides of cheesecloth up and over turkey. Twist ends of cheesecloth together, and secure tightly with string. Trim excess cheesecloth and string.

3. Stir together wine, next 4 ingredients, and 1 cup broth. Pour into roasting pan.
4. Bake turkey at 500° for 30 minutes.
5. Meanwhile, heat 1 cup butter and ½ cup broth in a saucepan over low heat just until butter is melted. Pour mixture over turkey. Reduce oven temperature to 300°, and bake 2½ hours, basting with pan drippings every 30 minutes.
6. Remove turkey from oven, and increase oven temperature to 400°. Carefully transfer turkey to a cutting board, using clean dish towels. Remove and discard cheesecloth and bacon. Carefully return turkey, breast side up, to roasting pan.
7. Bake turkey at 400° for 30 minutes or until skin is golden brown and a meat thermometer inserted into thickest portion of thigh registers 170° to 175°. Transfer turkey to a serving platter, reserving pan drippings in roasting pan. Let turkey stand 20 minutes before carving.
8. Pour pan drippings through a fine wire-mesh strainer into a 4-cup glass measuring cup. Let stand 10 minutes. Remove excess fat from surface of drippings.

9. Pour 2 cups drippings into a medium saucepan; stir in remaining 1 cup broth. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Combine flour and 2 Tbsp. butter to form a smooth paste. Whisk butter mixture into broth mixture, and cook, whisking constantly, 2 minutes or until thickened. Serve with turkey.

— ELIZABETH HEISKELL,
CLEVELAND, MISSISSIPPI

Sweet Potato Cups

MAKES 8 SERVINGS; PREP: 30 MIN.;
BAKE: 1 HR., 25 MIN.; **STAND:** 20 MIN.

Elizabeth sometimes uses a zester or channel knife to make designs on the outside of oranges. Save the orange pulp to make delicious Grand Mimosas to enjoy while you are preparing this special dish.

- 6 small sweet potatoes (about 2¾ lb.)
- 4 large navel oranges
- 1 (14-oz.) can sweetened condensed milk
- 3 Tbsp. melted butter
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 2 tsp. orange zest
- ¼ tsp. salt
- ⅛ tsp. ground nutmeg
- ⅛ tsp. ground allspice
- ⅛ tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1 cup miniature marshmallows

1. Preheat oven to 425°. Place sweet potatoes on an aluminum foil-lined baking sheet. Bake at 425° for 45 minutes or until tender. Let stand 20 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 350°.
2. Meanwhile, cut oranges in half crosswise. Scoop out pulp using a spoon,

leaving peel intact. Reserve orange pulp for another use.

3. Peel sweet potatoes, and place potato pulp in a large bowl. Add sweetened condensed milk and next 7 ingredients. Beat at medium speed with an electric mixer until smooth, stopping occasionally to remove any tough fibers, if necessary. Spoon about ½ cup mixture into each orange cup. Place orange cups in a 13- x 9-inch baking dish.
4. Bake at 350° for 20 minutes. Remove from oven, and top with marshmallows, pressing lightly to adhere. Bake 15 to 20 minutes or until marshmallows are melted and golden brown.

— ELIZABETH HEISKELL, CLEVELAND, MISSISSIPPI

Note: Orange cups and sweet potatoes can be made 1 day ahead. Chill scooped orange cups and baked sweet potatoes in separate zip-top plastic bags until ready to assemble.

Pecan-Ginger-Sweet Potato Cups:

Prepare recipe as directed through Step 3, adding ¼ tsp. ground ginger with sweetened condensed milk. Bake cups at 350° for 20 minutes. Top with ½ cup chopped pecans; top with marshmallows as directed. Proceed with recipe as directed.

Grand Mimosas

MAKES 6 TO 8 SERVINGS; PREP: 10 MIN.

Stir together 1 (750-milliliter) bottle chilled Champagne or sparkling wine, 2 cups chilled fresh orange juice, and ¼ to ½ cup orange liqueur. Serve immediately. Makes 6 to 8 servings.

Note: For testing purposes only, we used Grand Marnier for orange liqueur. ●

Expert Know-how

Test Kitchens Professional Marian Cooper Cairns shares her tips and secrets for success when making Delta Roasted Turkey.

- Carefully read the recipe before beginning, and allow plenty of time to cover all the steps. It's involved but definitely worth it.
- The cheesecloth needs to cover the entire bird, so make sure you have a large enough piece.
- A V-shaped roasting rack works best, but your favorite roasting rack will work just fine.
- Flipping the turkey may seem daunting, but using two clean dish towels or oven mitts makes the job much easier. Don't be afraid to make it a two-person task, if needed.
- Before completely removing the wrapped turkey from the oven, baste the cheesecloth; this will keep it from sticking to the skin.
- Use a small ladle or large spoon to skim the fat from gravy before bringing it to a boil.

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A Hip Way To Celebrate

Take a cue from this couple to freshen up your Hanukkah menu.

By Shirley Harrington

This couple puts a fun-loving spin on the usual holiday fare. "Our best parties are grab-a-plate style," says Mindi Shapiro Levine, as she and husband Brett prepare for visitors. "We like it when guests settle on barstools and hang out," Brett chimes in.



Their Hanukkah celebration is smartly streamlined. "We opted to skip the appetizer and a brisket dish," says Mindi, "so everyone has plenty of appetite for latkes."

Golden Potato Latkes

MAKES ABOUT 2 DOZEN; PREP: 30 MIN.,

COOK: 10 MIN. PER BATCH

Combining butter and oil for frying yields great flavor and browning. We love the large size and consistent heat of an electric skillet, but a nonstick skillet will work. (Use two skillets to cook more at one time.)

3 lb. Yukon gold potatoes, unpeeled

1 medium onion

2 Tbsp. lemon juice

2 large eggs, lightly beaten

1/2 cup unsalted matzo meal

1 tsp. kosher salt

3/4 tsp. pepper

6 Tbsp. butter

6 Tbsp. peanut oil

Kosher salt

Garnishes: small Yukon gold potatoes, green onions

1. Grate potatoes and onion through large holes of a box grater; toss with lemon juice. Spread mixture onto 2 clean, dry kitchen towels. Roll up each towel, starting with 1 long side. Wring towels to squeeze out excess liquid. Place potato mixture in a large bowl.

2. Stir in eggs, matzo meal, salt, and pepper. (Mixture will be dry but will hold its shape when pressed together.)

3. Melt 2 Tbsp. butter with 2 Tbsp. oil in a deep electric skillet heated to 375° or in a large nonstick skillet over medium to medium-high heat. Drop 6 to 8 loosely packed 1/4 cupfuls potato mixture into hot butter mixture; press lightly to flatten into 3-inch rounds. Cook 3 to 5 minutes on each side or until golden brown. Drain on paper towels. Sprinkle with additional salt. Repeat procedure with remaining butter, oil, and potato mixture. Serve latkes immediately, or keep warm on a wire rack on a baking sheet in a 250° oven up to 30 minutes. Garnish, if desired.

Note: For testing purposes only, we used Manischewitz Unsalted Matzo Meal.

Golden Potato-Parsnip Latkes:

Prepare recipe as directed, reducing potatoes to 2 lb. and grating 1 lb. peeled parsnips with potatoes and onion. Garnish with

parsnip slices and fresh parsley sprigs, if desired.

Golden Carrot-Zucchini Latkes:

Prepare recipe as directed, reducing potatoes to 1 lb. and grating 1 lb. peeled carrots and 1 lb. zucchini with potatoes and onion. Garnish with shaved carrots and zucchini, if desired.

Note: To make the garnish, use a vegetable peeler to shave thin, lengthwise strips of carrot and zucchini. To make garnish ahead, wrap strips in damp paper towels, place in zip-top plastic bags, and chill up to 24 hours.

Horseradish-Sour Cream Sauce

MAKES 1 CUP; PREP: 10 MIN., **CHILL:** 30 MIN.

1 (8-oz.) container sour cream

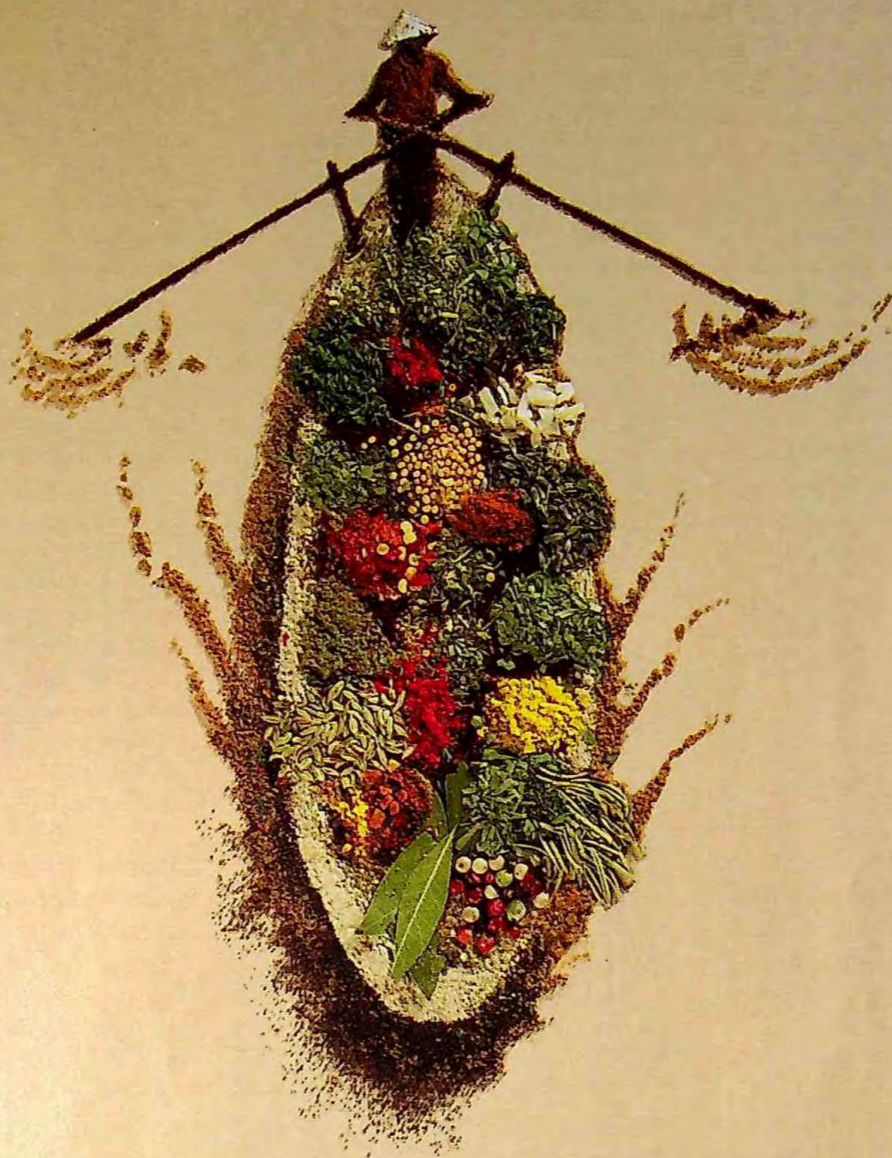
2 Tbsp. thinly sliced fresh chives

4 tsp. horseradish

1 tsp. lemon zest

INSET: Brett and Mindi Levine **LEFT:** "When you make Golden Potato, Golden Potato-Parsnip, and Golden Carrot-Zucchini Latkes, add distinctive garnishes to clue guests in on the different flavors," advises Mindi. All three are superb with Horseradish-Sour Cream Sauce and Spiced-Thyme Applesauce.





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Holiday Dinners SPECIAL SECTION

1/2 tsp. coarsely ground pepper

1/4 tsp. salt

Garnish: sliced fresh chives

1. Stir together first 6 ingredients. Cover and chill 30 minutes before serving. Garnish, if desired. Store in an airtight container in refrigerator up to 2 days.

Spiced-Thyme Applesauce

MAKES 1 1/4 CUPS; **PREP:** 10 MIN.,

COOK: 7 MIN.

Mindi gave us a heads-up that the ginger, thyme, and cloves combo was different but delicious. We agreed. Butter adds a richness and creaminess to the texture that's worth the calories.

1 cup chunky applesauce

1 large ripe pear, peeled and finely chopped

1 Tbsp. butter

1 tsp. fresh lemon juice

1 tsp. finely grated fresh ginger

3/4 tsp. finely chopped fresh thyme

1/8 tsp. ground cloves

1/8 tsp. kosher salt

1. Stir together all ingredients in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring often; reduce heat to low, and simmer, stirring occasionally, 5 to 7 minutes or until pear is tender.

Note: For testing purposes only, we used Musselman's Chunky Apple Sauce. To make ahead, prepare recipe as directed. Store in an airtight container in refrigerator up to 2 days.

Microwave in a microwave-safe glass bowl at HIGH 1 to 2 minutes or until thoroughly heated, stirring at 30-second intervals.

Smoked Salmon-Avocado Salad

MAKES 6 TO 8 SERVINGS; **PREP:** 15 MIN.

The Levines make the salad dressing tart to balance the richness of the pan-fried latkes. For a weekday supper, they suggest whisking in a little extra olive oil and serving with French bread.



1/4 cup olive oil

3 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice

1 tsp. Dijon mustard

3/4 tsp. sugar

1/2 tsp. kosher salt

1/4 tsp. pepper

1 (5-oz.) package arugula, thoroughly washed*

6 radishes, thinly sliced

2 (4-oz.) packages thinly sliced smoked salmon

1 avocado, sliced

1. Whisk together first 6 ingredients. Gently toss together arugula, radishes, and half of olive oil mixture in a large bowl. Arrange on a serving platter with salmon and avocado. Serve immediately with remaining olive oil mixture.

*1 (5-oz.) package spring mix, thoroughly washed, may be substituted.

Note: For testing purposes only, we used Echo Falls Smoked Salmon at one tasting and Woodsmoke Provisions at another.

Mindi's Doughnuts and Easy Raspberry Sauce

MAKES 8 SERVINGS; **PREP:** 10 MIN.,

STAND: 10 MIN.

Doughnuts are a true passion for Mindi—she even asks for them instead of birthday cake. "This recipe is an awesome sweet to add to your brunch menus too," says Mindi.

1 (10-oz.) jar seedless raspberry fruit spread

2 Tbsp. orange liqueur*

1/2 tsp. vanilla extract

1 cup whipping cream

1 Tbsp. powdered sugar

4 dozen glazed yeast doughnut holes

1. Microwave fruit spread in microwave-safe glass bowl at HIGH 45 seconds or until warm and easy to stir. Stir in liqueur and vanilla. Let stand 10 minutes or until slightly thickened but still smooth.

2. Beat whipping cream at medium speed with an electric mixer until foamy; gradually add powdered sugar, beating until soft peaks form.

3. Serve doughnut holes with fruit spread mixture and whipped cream.

*2 Tbsp. orange juice may be substituted.

Note: For testing purposes only, we used Smucker's Simply Fruit Seedless Red Raspberry for fruit spread. ●

ABOVE: Roll salmon into spirals if you have extra time when making Smoked Salmon-Avocado Salad. **LEFT:** Mindi's Doughnuts and Easy Raspberry Sauce dessert is a nod to a fried, jelly-filled pastry often eaten at Hanukkah. For a fun look, offer guests individual servings using curved appetizer spoons and fancy party picks.



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Let's Do Lunch

Join these *Southern Living* fans as they gather for a splendid meal. By **Donna Florio**

RIGHT: Gayle, Amy, and Ann share a laugh as they add the finishing touches. **FAR RIGHT:** Ragoût of Mushrooms With Creamy Polenta is a hearty meatless main course. Don't let polenta scare you—it's just the Italian version of grits.



On the third Monday of each month, a congenial group of friends gathers for lunch in Alexandria, Virginia. Ginger Arnold, Anita Guthrie, Betty Heilig, Gayle Shaw, Amy Southard, and Ann Vernon—The *Southern Living* Lunch Bunch as they call themselves—choose their recipes from the pages of our magazine.

We joined them for a holiday celebration where they shared some of their own dishes combined with favorites from past issues. Citrus Salad is a bright complement to creamy Ragoût of Mushrooms With Creamy Polenta, while Bacon-Wrapped Water Chestnuts provides a sweet-and-salty before-lunch nibble. Let these outstanding recipes, along with the warmth and laughter of these friends, resonate with you and your family.

Ragoût of Mushrooms With Creamy Polenta

MAKES 6 SERVINGS; PREP: 15 MIN., **COOK:** 14 MIN.

You can substitute your favorite red wine in this dish if you don't have port.

- 1 cup halved and thinly sliced shallots
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 4 Tbsp. olive oil
- 2 (8-oz.) packages sliced baby portobello mushrooms*
- 2 (3.5-oz.) packages fresh shiitake mushrooms, stemmed and sliced
- ½ cup port
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 4 Tbsp. fresh flat-leaf parsley, chopped
- 4 Tbsp. butter
- 1½ Tbsp. fresh thyme leaves
- ¾ tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. pepper
- Creamy Polenta
- Freshly shaved Parmesan cheese
- Garnish: fresh thyme sprigs

1. Sauté shallots and garlic in hot oil in a large skillet over medium heat 2 minutes. Increase heat to medium-high, add mushrooms, and cook, stirring constantly, 4 to 5

minutes. Stir in port; cook 2 minutes. Stir in broth and next 5 ingredients. Reduce heat to low, and simmer 5 minutes or until slightly thickened.

2. Serve over Creamy Polenta with shaved Parmesan cheese. Garnish, if desired.

*2 (8-oz.) packages sliced fresh button mushrooms may be substituted.

Creamy Polenta:

MAKES 6 SERVINGS; PREP: 5 MIN., **COOK:** 8 MIN

Polenta can be found in the gourmet or international section of the grocery store. Don't let the polenta boil, or it will spatter.

- 7 cups chicken broth
- 2 cups polenta
- 1 (8-oz.) package ⅓-less-fat cream cheese

1. Bring 6 cups chicken broth to a light boil in a Dutch oven over medium-high heat; slowly stir in polenta. Reduce heat to low, and cook, stirring constantly, 2 to 3 minutes or until polenta thickens. (Do not boil.) Stir in cream cheese until blended. Stir in remaining chicken broth. Cover and keep warm.

—ANITA GUTHRIE, ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

➔ turn to page 132



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Holiday Dinners SPECIAL SECTION



LEFT: Brandy Slush is a great party-starter any time of the year. BELOW: Betty, Amy, and the group enjoy a Brandy Slush before their meal.



Brandy Slush

MAKES 19 CUPS; **PREP:** 15 MIN., **STEEP:** 5 MIN., **COOL:** 30 MIN., **FREEZE:** 4 HR.

This makes a big batch, so keep one bag in the freezer up to three months.

- 9 cups boiling water, divided
- 4 regular-size tea bags
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 (12-oz.) can frozen orange juice concentrate, thawed
- 1 (12-oz.) can frozen lemonade concentrate, thawed
- 1 2/3 cups brandy
- 1/4 cup lime juice
- 4 (10-oz.) bottles club soda, chilled
- Garnish: lime slices

1. Pour 2 cups boiling water over tea bags; cover and let steep 5 minutes. Remove and discard tea bags, squeezing gently.
2. Stir together remaining 7 cups boiling water and 2 cups sugar in a Dutch oven, stirring until sugar is dissolved. Stir in tea mixture, orange juice concentrate, and next 3 ingredients. Let cool to room temperature (about 30 minutes). Divide mixture between 2 (1-gal.) zip-top plastic freezer bags; freeze 4 hours.
3. Remove bags from freezer 30 minutes before serving. Squeeze 1 bag with hands to break mixture into chunks; pour into a pitcher, and stir in 2 bottles club soda until slushy. Repeat with remaining bag, if desired. Garnish, if desired.

Quick Yeast Rolls

MAKES 2 DOZEN; **PREP:** 20 MIN., **STAND:** 5 MIN., **RISE:** 45 MIN., **BAKE:** 15 MIN.

Make these rolls up to one month ahead. Wrap cooled rolls loosely in aluminum foil, place in a zip-top plastic freezer bag, and freeze. Heat foil-wrapped rolls in a 325° oven for 30 minutes or until warm.

- 1 (1/4-oz.) envelope active dry yeast
- 1/4 cup warm water (105° to 115°)
- 1 tsp. sugar
- 2 Tbsp. sugar
- 2 Tbsp. butter, softened
- 1 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1 large egg
- 1 1/4 cups milk
- 4 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 Tbsp. melted butter

1. Stir together yeast, 1/4 cup warm water, and 1 tsp. sugar in a 2-cup glass measuring cup; let stand 5 minutes.
2. Beat 2 Tbsp. sugar, softened butter, and salt at medium speed with a heavy-duty electric stand mixer until creamy. Add egg, milk, and yeast mixture, beating until blended. Gradually add flour, beating at low speed until smooth. Turn dough

out onto a well-floured surface, and knead until smooth and elastic (2 to 3 minutes). Place in a well-greased bowl, turning to grease top.

3. Cover and let rise in a warm place (85°), free from drafts, 30 minutes or until doubled in bulk.
4. Preheat oven to 400°. Punch dough down; turn dough out onto a floured surface. Divide dough into 24 pieces; shape into balls. Place in 2 greased 9-inch square pans. Cover and let rise in a warm place (85°), free from drafts, 15 minutes.
5. Bake at 400° for 15 minutes or until golden. Brush tops with melted butter, and serve immediately.

Citrus Salad

MAKES 6 SERVINGS; **PREP:** 30 MIN., **BAKE:** 8 MIN.

This salad is also delicious without nuts.

- 2 Tbsp. chopped walnuts or pecans (optional)
- 1 (5-oz.) bag mixed baby greens, thoroughly washed
- 2 navel oranges, peeled and sectioned
- 1 large grapefruit, peeled and sectioned
- 1 pear, peeled and thinly sliced
- 1 cup seedless red grapes
- Orange Vinaigrette

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Bake nuts in a single layer in a shallow pan for 6 to 8 minutes or until toasted and fragrant.
2. Place greens in a large bowl. Add orange sections, grapefruit sections, sliced pear, and grapes. Drizzle with 1/4 cup Orange Vinaigrette, tossing gently to coat. Sprinkle toasted nuts over salad, and serve immediately with remaining vinaigrette.

Orange Vinaigrette:

MAKES ABOUT 1 1/4 CUPS; **PREP:** 10 MIN.

- 1/4 cup white wine vinegar
- 2 tsp. grated orange rind
- 3 Tbsp. fresh orange juice
- 1 Tbsp. sugar
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. pepper
- 3/4 cup olive oil

1. Whisk together first 6 ingredients in a small bowl; add oil in a slow steady stream, whisking until blended.

—BETTY HEILIG, ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

➔ turn to page 134



Why trust your cheesecake
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Katie Brown, Lifestyle Expert and TV Host.
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PHILADELPHIA New York Cheesecake

Prep: 15 min. plus refrigeration
Bake: 40 min.

6 HONEY MAID Honey Grahams, crushed
1 cup plus 3 Tbsp. sugar, divided
3 Tbsp. butter or margarine, melted
5 pkg. (8 oz. each) PHILADELPHIA
Cream Cheese, softened
3 Tbsp. flour
1 Tbsp. vanilla
1 cup BREAKSTONE'S or KNUDSEN Sour Cream
4 eggs
1 can (21 oz.) cherry pie filling

During tests of plain NY style cheesecake made with PHILADELPHIA Cream Cheese
versus store-brand versions, consumers rated PHILLY cheesecake better tasting.

HEAT oven to 325°F.
Line 13x9-inch pan with
foil. Mix crumbs, 3 Tbsp.
sugar and butter; press
onto bottom of pan.
Bake 10 min.

BEAT cream cheese, sugar,
flour and vanilla until
blended. Add sour cream;
blend. Add eggs, 1 at a
time, mixing on low speed
until blended.

BAKE 40 min. or until
center is almost set. Cool
completely. Refrigerate
4 hours. Use foil to lift
cheesecake from pan.

TOP with pie filling and serve.
Makes 16 servings.



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Holiday Dinners SPECIAL SECTION

Bacon-Wrapped Water Chestnuts

MAKES 10 TO 12 APPETIZER SERVINGS;

PREP: 20 MIN., **BAKE:** 45 MIN.

- 1 (8-oz.) can sliced water chestnuts
- 12 oz. fresh pineapple chunks, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 15 bacon slices, halved
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup teriyaki sauce

1. Preheat oven to 400°. Place 1 water chestnut slice on top of 1 pineapple chunk; wrap with 1 bacon piece. Repeat procedure with remaining water chestnuts, pineapple, and bacon. Place, seam sides down, in a lightly greased broiler pan.
2. Bake at 400° for 20 to 25 minutes; baste both sides with teriyaki sauce. Turn and bake 20 more minutes or until bacon is crisp. Serve immediately.

Cheesecake Squares

MAKES 9 SERVINGS; **PREP:** 30 MIN.,

BAKE: 30 MIN., **COOL:** 1 HR., **CHILL:** 8 HR.

Chocolate Crust

- 1 (8-oz.) package cream cheese, softened
 - 1 (3-oz.) package cream cheese, softened
 - $\frac{2}{3}$ cup sugar
 - 6 large eggs
 - $\frac{1}{3}$ cup whipping cream
 - 2 tsp. instant coffee granules
 - 9 (1-oz.) semisweet chocolate baking squares
 - 1 Tbsp. plus 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- Garnishes: powdered sugar, chocolate-covered coffee beans, thawed whipped topping

1. Prepare Chocolate Crust as directed. Increase oven temperature to 375°.
2. Beat cream cheese and sugar at medium speed with an electric mixer 2 to 3 minutes or until light and fluffy. Add eggs, 1 at a time, beating just until blended after each addition.
3. Microwave whipping cream in a 1-cup microwave-safe measuring cup at HIGH 30 seconds or until very hot. Stir in coffee granules until completely dissolved. Cool coffee mixture slightly.
4. Microwave chocolate in a microwave-safe bowl at HIGH 1 minute. Microwave 1 more minute, stirring at 15-second intervals. Add melted chocolate, vanilla,



Make-ahead Cheesecake Squares deliver rich, chocolate-coffee flavor and a truffle-like texture.

and coffee mixture to cream cheese mixture. Beat at low speed just until blended. Pour mixture into prepared Chocolate Crust.

5. Bake at 375° for 30 minutes or until edges are firm and center is still soft. Let cool to room temperature (about 1 hour); cover and chill 8 hours. Cut into squares. Garnish, if desired.

Chocolate Crust:

MAKES 1 (9-INCH) CRUST; **PREP:** 15 MIN., **COOK:** 5 MIN., **BAKE:** 8 MIN., **COOL:** 15 MIN., **CHILL:** 30 MIN.

- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup butter
- 2 (1-oz.) semisweet chocolate baking squares
- $1\frac{1}{3}$ cups fine, dry breadcrumbs
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup sugar

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Stir together butter and chocolate in a medium-size heavy saucepan over low heat, stirring often, 3 to 5 minutes or until chocolate is melted. Remove from heat, and stir in breadcrumbs and sugar until well blended. Press mixture onto bottom of a lightly greased 9-inch square pan.
2. Bake at 350° for 8 minutes. Cool on a wire rack 15 minutes. Chill 30 minutes. •

—AMY SOUTHARD, ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

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1/2 teaspoon Italian herb seasoning *or*
1/4 teaspoon each dried oregano and basil
1/4 cup Crisco® Extra Virgin Olive Oil
2 teaspoons grated Parmesan cheese
Freshly ground black pepper
Crusty baguettes or Italian bread



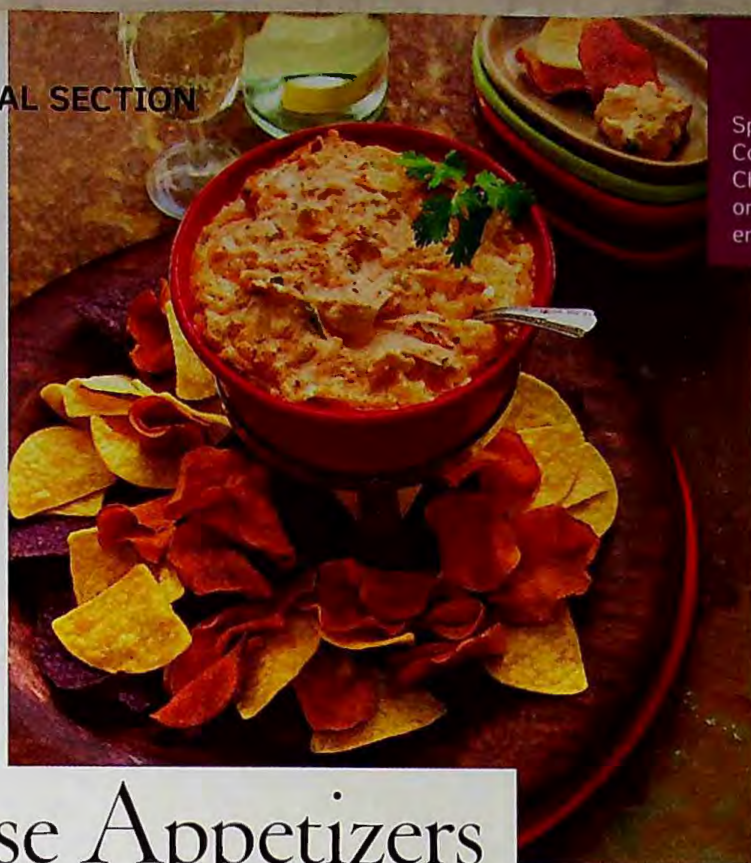
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Combine seasoning and olive oil on a 6-inch plate. Top with Parmesan cheese. Dip slices or pieces of crusty bread into oil.

Prep time: 5 min | Yield: 1 serving

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Simple enough to put together on short notice, these quick-to-make crowd-pleasers can also be prepared well before guests arrive. Reheat Feta Cheese Squares straight from the freezer and then pass around on a pretty tray. A fondue pot or mini slow cooker keeps Colby-Pepper Jack Cheese Dip warm until the party winds down. By **Mary Allen Perry**



Spice things up with Colby-Pepper Jack Cheese Dip, a twist on creamy chicken enchiladas.

Warm Cheese Appetizers

Colby-Pepper Jack Cheese Dip

MAKES 10 SERVINGS; **PREP:** 15 MIN.,

BAKE: 30 MIN.

Prepare up to a day ahead; cover and chill in an airtight container, and bake just before serving.

1 (8-oz.) package cream cheese, softened

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup sour cream

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup mayonnaise

1 Tbsp. finely chopped canned chipotle pepper in adobo sauce

2 tsp. chili powder

2 cups chopped cooked chicken

2 cups (8 oz.) shredded colby-Jack cheese blend

1 (4-oz.) can chopped green chiles

4 green onions, finely chopped

2 jalapeño peppers, seeded and minced

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped fresh cilantro

Garnish: fresh cilantro sprig

Tortilla and sweet potato chips

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Stir together first 5 ingredients in a large bowl until smooth. Stir in chicken and next 5 ingredients until blended. Spoon cheese mixture into a lightly greased 8-inch square baking dish.
2. Bake at 350° for 30 minutes or until bubbly. Spoon into a serving bowl. Garnish, if desired. Serve with tortilla and sweet potato chips.

—VICKI ROSS, AUSTIN, TEXAS

Feta Cheese Squares

MAKES 5 DOZEN; **PREP:** 10 MIN.,

BAKE: 30 MIN., **COOL:** 10 MIN.

Bake up to 1 month ahead and freeze in an airtight container or zip-top plastic freezer bag. Preheat oven to 350°, and bake frozen squares on a baking sheet for 10 to 15 minutes or until thoroughly heated.

2 cups all-purpose baking mix

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. baking powder

$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. salt

1 cup milk

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter, melted

4 (4-oz.) packages feta cheese with garlic and herbs, crumbled

1 (8-oz.) container small-curd cottage cheese

3 large eggs, lightly beaten

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Stir together baking mix, baking powder, and salt in a large bowl. Stir in milk and remaining ingredients, stirring just until dry ingredients are moistened. Spoon cheese mixture into a lightly greased 15- x 10-inch jelly-roll pan.
2. Bake at 350° for 30 minutes or until golden brown and set. Remove from oven, and let cool on a wire rack 10 minutes. Cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch squares, and serve immediately.

—APHRODITE HERO, RESTON, VIRGINIA

Note: For testing purposes only, we used Bisquick All-Purpose Baking Mix.

Spinach-and-Parmesan Crostini

MAKES 1 DOZEN; **PREP:** 10 MIN.,

BAKE: 10 MIN.

Prepare the spinach-and-cheese mixture up to a day ahead; cover and chill in an airtight container.

1 (10-oz.) package frozen spinach, thawed

1 (8-oz.) package cream cheese, softened

1 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup mayonnaise

1 large garlic clove, minced

$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. freshly ground pepper

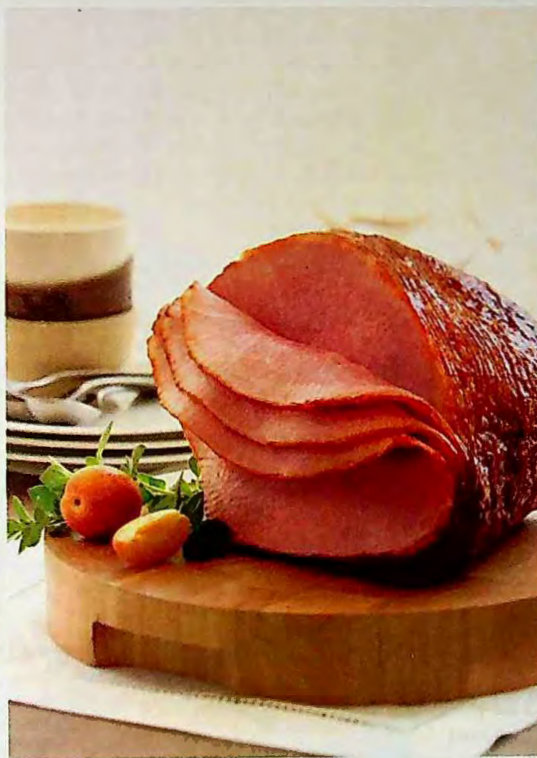
$\frac{1}{2}$ (16-oz.) French bread loaf, cut diagonally into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch slices

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup pine nuts

1. Preheat oven to 325°. Drain spinach well, pressing between paper towels to remove excess water.
2. Stir together spinach, cream cheese, Parmesan cheese, and next 3 ingredients in a medium bowl. Top each bread slice with 2 Tbsp. cheese mixture. Sprinkle with pine nuts. Place bread slices on a baking sheet.
3. Bake at 325° for 10 minutes or until thoroughly heated and nuts are toasted.

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Delta-Style Catfish

Makes 6 servings

Prep: 10 min., Broil: 12 min.

3 cups cornflakes cereal,
finely crushed
¾ cup grated Parmesan cheese
1 tsp. paprika
½ tsp. salt
½ cup HELLMANN'S or Best Foods
Real Mayonnaise*
1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce

6 (4- to 6-oz.) catfish or tilapia fillets
1½ tsp. Cajun seasoning
Vegetable cooking spray
3 Tbsp. chopped fresh parsley
Garnish: lemon wedges

PREHEAT oven to broil. Stir together first 4 ingredients in a large shallow bowl or pie plate. Whisk together mayonnaise and Worcestershire sauce in a small bowl.

BRUSH mayonnaise mixture onto both sides of catfish fillets. Sprinkle ¼ tsp. Cajun seasoning onto 1 side of each fillet.

DREDGE fillets in cornflake mixture; transfer to a wire rack coated with cooking spray. Place wire rack in an aluminum foil-lined pan.

BROIL 6 inches from heat 6 minutes on each side or until golden brown and fish flakes with a fork. Sprinkle with parsley. Serve immediately. Garnish, if desired.

*½ cup HELLMANN'S or Best Foods Light Mayonnaise may be substituted.

Spinach-Artichoke Gratin

Makes 6 to 8 servings

Prep: 15 min., Cook: 10 min., Bake: 15 min.,
Stand: 5 min.

2 cups chopped yellow onion
2 Tbsp. all-purpose flour
1¼ cups milk
¾ cup (3 oz.) freshly shredded Parmesan
cheese
¼ cup HELLMANN'S or Best Foods Real
Mayonnaise
½ (14-oz.) can artichoke hearts, drained
and quartered
1 tsp. salt
¼ tsp. freshly ground pepper
2 (10-oz.) packages frozen spinach, thawed
and well drained

PREHEAT oven to 425°. Sauté onions in a lightly greased large nonstick skillet over medium heat 6 minutes or until tender. Add flour, and cook, stirring constantly, 30 seconds to 1 minute. Add milk; cook, stirring frequently, 2 to 3 minutes or until thickened. Remove from heat.

STIR Stir in ¼ cup Parmesan cheese and next 4 ingredients. Add spinach, and stir until thoroughly combined. Transfer spinach mixture to a lightly greased 8-inch square baking dish. Sprinkle with remaining ¼ cup Parmesan cheese.

BAKE at 425° for 15 minutes or until cheese is melted and mixture is bubbly. Let stand 5 minutes before serving.

Squash Casserole

Makes 8 servings

Prep: 15 min., Cook: 25 min., Bake: 30 min.

3 lb. yellow squash, cut into ¼-inch-thick
rounds
1 small onion, chopped
4½ tsp. salt
16 saltine crackers, divided
1½ cups (6 oz.) shredded sharp Cheddar
cheese, divided
½ cup HELLMANN'S or Best Foods Real
Mayonnaise*
1 large egg, lightly beaten
2 Tbsp. butter, melted
¼ tsp. pepper
¼ tsp. salt

COOK first 3 ingredients in boiling water to cover in a Dutch oven 25 minutes or until squash is very tender. Drain well; mash mixture with a fork.

PREHEAT oven to 350°. Crush 10 crackers, and stir into squash mixture; stir in ½ cup cheese and next 5 ingredients. Spoon mixture into a lightly greased 11- x 7-inch baking dish.

CRUSH remaining 6 crackers, and sprinkle over squash mixture; top with remaining 1 cup cheese.

BAKE, uncovered, at 350° for 30 minutes or until cheese is melted and mixture is bubbly.

*½ cup HELLMANN'S or Best Foods Light Mayonnaise may be substituted.

NOTE: To make ahead, prepare recipe as directed through Step 2. Cover and chill 8 to 24 hours. Let stand at room temperature 30 minutes. Uncover and proceed with recipe as directed.



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Sweet Potatoes and Shrimp

Makes 4 servings

Prep: 35 min., Cook: 36 min., Stand: 5 min.

KITCHENAID Electric Stand Mixer
KITCHENAID Fruit and Vegetable
Strainer Attachment
1 1/4 lb. unpeeled, medium-size raw shrimp
(31/40 count)
3 1/2 lb. sweet potatoes, peeled
1/4 cup milk
3 Tbsp. butter
1/4 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. freshly ground pepper
6 bacon slices
1 (8-oz.) package sliced fresh mushrooms
2 Tbsp. cornstarch
3 garlic cloves, minced
3 Tbsp. apple juice
2 Tbsp. dry white wine
1 tsp. fresh lemon juice
Garnish: fresh flat-leaf parsley sprigs

PEEL shrimp; devein, if desired.

PIERCE potatoes several times with tines of a fork. Place on a microwave-safe plate; cover with damp paper towels.

MICROWAVE potatoes at HIGH 10 to 12 minutes or until tender. Let stand 5 minutes. Cut into 1-inch cubes.

ATTACH fruit and vegetable strainer attachment to electric stand mixer according to manufacturer's instructions. Strain potatoes into a bowl according to manufacturer's instructions. Scrape any remaining potato puree from strainer tray into bowl. Stir together potato puree, milk, and next 3 ingredients. Cover and keep warm.

COOK bacon in a large skillet over medium heat 8 to 10 minutes or until crisp. Remove bacon, and drain on paper towels, reserving 2 Tbsp. drippings in skillet. Crumble bacon.

SAUTÉ mushrooms in hot drippings 8 minutes or until tender. Remove from skillet.

TOSS shrimp in cornstarch. Add shrimp to skillet, and sauté over medium heat 3 to 5 minutes. Add garlic and next 3 ingredients. Increase heat to medium-high, and cook 1 minute or just until shrimp turn pink.

SPOON sweet potato mixture onto a serving platter. Top with shrimp mixture and mushrooms. Sprinkle with bacon. Garnish, if desired.

Brown Butter-Pecan-Bourbon Ice Cream

Makes about 1 qt.

Prep: 25 min., Cook: 10 min., Chill: 1 hr.

KITCHENAID Electric Stand Mixer
KITCHENAID Ice Cream Maker Attachment
1/2 cup butter
1 cup chopped pecans
1 1/2 cups milk
1 1/2 cups heavy cream
3/4 cup sugar
8 egg yolks
2 to 4 Tbsp. bourbon
1 tsp. vanilla extract
Garnish: chocolate-dipped pecan halves

MELT butter in a medium skillet over medium heat. Cook, stirring frequently, 2 to 3 minutes or until butter turns light brown and golden. Add pecans, and sauté 1 to 2 minutes or until lightly browned and toasted. Remove pecans with a slotted spoon, reserving browned butter and pecans separately.

BRING milk, cream, and sugar to a boil in a medium saucepan over medium heat, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat, and stir in browned butter.

BEAT egg yolks at medium-high speed with electric stand mixer until thick and pale (about

2 to 3 minutes). Gradually stir one-fourth of hot cream mixture into eggs. Add yolk mixture to remaining hot cream mixture, stirring constantly. Cook over medium-low heat, stirring constantly, 5 minutes or until a candy thermometer registers 170° and mixture lightly coats back of a spoon.

POUR mixture through a fine wire-mesh strainer into a bowl. Stir in bourbon, vanilla, and pecans. Cover and chill 1 hour.

ATTACH ice cream maker attachment to mixer according to manufacturer's instructions. Prepare ice cream according to manufacturer's instructions, using stir speed 1, for 15 to 20 minutes or until mixture reaches desired consistency. Serve immediately, or transfer to an airtight container and freeze to desired texture. Garnish, if desired.

Ground Chicken Lettuce Wraps

Makes 4 servings

Prep: 30 min., Cook: 11 min.

KITCHENAID Electric Stand Mixer
KITCHENAID Food Grinder Attachment
1 lb. skinned and boned chicken breasts,
cut into long, narrow strips
2 garlic cloves
1 Tbsp. canola oil

2 tsp. sesame oil
3 green onions, chopped
2 Tbsp. hoisin sauce
4 tsp. lite soy sauce
1 tsp. lime zest
4 tsp. fresh lime juice, divided
1 (1-inch) piece fresh ginger, peeled
1/2 cup sweet chili sauce*
8 large iceberg lettuce leaves
Garnishes: chopped green onions, chopped
peanuts, soy sauce

ATTACH food grinder attachment to electric stand mixer according to manufacturer's instructions. Grind chicken with garlic according to manufacturer's instructions using the fine grinding plate.

COOK chicken mixture in hot oils in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat 8 to 10 minutes or until chicken is done. Stir in green onions, next 3 ingredients, and 1 Tbsp. lime juice. Cook 1 minute.

GRATE ginger using the large holes of a box grater. Squeeze juice from grated ginger into a small bowl to equal 1/2 tsp.; discard solids.

STIR together ginger juice, chili sauce, 1 tsp. water, and remaining 1 tsp. lime juice until blended. Serve chicken mixture on lettuce leaves with ginger-chili sauce. Garnish, if desired.


*Hot chili sauce may be substituted.



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Great Recipes from the

SOUTHERN LIVING COOKING SCHOOL

presented by Mahatma and Success

Sage Butternut Squash Soup With Brown Rice

Makes 8 servings

Prep: 45 min., Cook: 30 min., Cool: 10 min.

- 1 (3.5-oz.) bag SUCCESS Brown Rice, uncooked
- 1½ cups chopped onion
- ½ cup chopped carrot
- ¼ cup chopped celery
- 1 Tbsp. minced garlic
- 1 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 2 lb. butternut squash, peeled, seeded, and cut into 1-inch cubes
- 3 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 2 Tbsp. chopped fresh sage
- ½ cup fat-free evaporated milk
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 Tbsp. chopped fresh sage (optional)

PREPARE rice according to package directions.

SAUTÉ onion and next 3 ingredients in hot oil in a large Dutch oven over medium heat 5 minutes. Add squash, broth, and 2 Tbsp. chopped fresh sage. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to medium-low, and cook 25 minutes or until squash is tender. Let cool 10 minutes.

PROCESS squash mixture, in batches, in a blender until smooth, stopping to scrape down sides as needed. Return mixture to Dutch oven, and stir in evaporated milk, salt and pepper to taste, and, if desired, 1 Tbsp. chopped fresh sage. Serve soup in individual bowls with a scoop of brown rice.

Honey-Ginger Baked Salmon With Jasmine Rice

Makes 4 servings

Prep: 20 min., Cook: 6 min., Chill: 15 min.,
Bake: 20 min.

- 2 (3.5-oz.) bags SUCCESS Jasmine Rice, uncooked
- ½ cup orange juice
- ½ cup honey
- ¼ cup lite soy sauce
- 1 Tbsp. minced garlic
- 1 Tbsp. minced fresh ginger
- 4 (4-oz.) salmon fillets
- ¼ cup sliced green onions

PREPARE rice according to package directions.

PREHEAT oven to 375°. Cook orange juice and next 4 ingredients in a small saucepan over medium heat, stirring occasionally, 1 minute; let cool slightly.

RESERVE ¾ cup marinade; transfer remaining marinade to a large shallow dish or zip-top

plastic freezer bag; add salmon. Cover or seal, and chill 15 minutes. Remove salmon from marinade, discarding marinade. Place salmon in an aluminum foil-lined pan.

BAKE at 375° for 20 minutes or to desired degree of doneness.

Meanwhile, **COOK** reserved marinade in a small saucepan over medium heat 5 minutes or until sauce is thick and syrupy.

TRANSFER rice to a serving platter, and top with salmon. Drizzle with sauce, and sprinkle with green onions.

- ½ cup roasted, salted pistachios, finely chopped

Garnish: fresh mint sprigs

BRING rice and 4 cups water to a boil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat; reduce heat to low, and simmer, uncovered, 20 minutes. Drain rice, and return to saucepan.

STIR milk and sugar into rice. Cook, uncovered, over low heat 40 minutes. Stir in evaporated milk and ground cardamom. Cook 5 minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in pistachios.

SPREAD pudding into a 13- x 9-inch baking dish. Cover and chill 1 to 24 hours. Serve in dessert bowls. Garnish, if desired.

Bombay Dream Rice Pudding

Makes 4 servings (about 5 cups)

Prep: 10 min.; Cook: 1 hr., 5 min.; Chill: 1 hr.

- 1 cup MAHATMA Basmati Rice, uncooked
- 3 cups milk
- ½ cup sugar
- ½ cup evaporated milk
- ½ tsp. ground cardamom



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A Healthy Holiday Recipe from Mahatma® and Success® Rice!

You will enjoy the good taste of this recipe and the nutritional benefits of whole grain brown rice. Because the bran layer is not milled away, brown rice is a natural source of important vitamins and minerals recommended by USDA Dietary Guidelines.

CRANBERRY-PECAN BROWN RICE STUFFING

- 1 cup Mahatma® Brown Rice or 2 bags Success® Brown Rice
- 1/2 cup dried cranberries
- 1 teaspoon dried orange peel
- 1/2 cup chicken stock
- 1 tablespoon margarine
- 1/2 cup celery, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons shallots, finely chopped (may substitute onion)
- 1 teaspoon poultry seasoning
- 1/2 cup toasted pecans, chopped
- 1/4 cup fresh parsley, chopped
- salt and pepper, to taste

Prepare rice according to package directions.

In a medium microwave-safe bowl, mix cranberries and orange peel with chicken stock and microwave on HIGH for 2 minutes. Set aside.

Heat a large sauce pan over high heat and add margarine. Stir in celery, shallots and poultry seasoning and sauté 3 minutes. Stir in cranberries, orange peel, chicken stock, pecans, parsley and rice and cook over medium heat for 3 more minutes or until all liquid is absorbed. Serves 8.

To toast pecans: Preheat oven to 350°F. Place pecans on a small cookie sheet and bake for 5 minutes. Be careful not to burn pecans. Cool.



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Eat, drink, and enjoy a buffet of good-for-you foods. That's the goal of Hebni (pronounced ebony) Nutrition Consultants, a nonprofit group of Florida-based dietitians. Using recipes adapted from *The Family Style Soul Food Diabetes Cookbook*, you can treat your guests to delectable dishes that are so full of flavor, you'd never guess that they are wholesome too.

By Charla Draper

Party in Style With Light Fare

Power Salad

MAKES 8 TO 10 SERVINGS; **PREP:** 25 MIN.,

COOK: 27 MIN., **CHILL:** 2 HR.

Make this salad up to 12 hours ahead.

- 1/4 cup chopped walnuts
- 2 1/4 lb. sweet potatoes (about 4 medium),
peeled and cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 2 lb. Granny Smith apples (about 4 medium),
cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 2 Tbsp. fresh lime juice
- 2 Tbsp. no-calorie sweetener
- 3 Tbsp. raisins
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/2 cup plain fat-free yogurt
- 3 Tbsp. reduced-fat mayonnaise

1. Heat nuts in a small nonstick skillet over medium-low heat, stirring often, 8 to 10 minutes or until lightly toasted and fragrant.
2. Arrange sweet potatoes in a steamer basket or stainless-steel colander in a 4- to 6-qt. Dutch oven over boiling water. Cover and steam 16 to 17 minutes or until potatoes are fork tender. Plunge potatoes into ice water to stop the cooking process; drain.
3. Place apples in large bowl. Sprinkle

with lime juice and no-calorie sweetener; toss gently to coat. Stir in sweet potatoes, raisins, salt, and 3 Tbsp. walnuts.

4. Stir together yogurt and mayonnaise. Add yogurt mixture to sweet potato mixture, tossing gently to coat. Sprinkle with remaining 1 Tbsp. walnuts. Cover and chill 2 to 12 hours.

Note: For testing purposes only, we used *Splenda No Calorie Sweetener*.

Dan the Man's Pork Loin Roast

MAKES 8 SERVINGS; **PREP:** 15 MIN.,

CHILL: 2 HR., **STAND:** 40 MIN.,

GRILL: 45 MIN.

Pair this pork roast with Sautéed Spinach.

- 1/2 cup lite soy sauce
- 1 Tbsp. Caribbean jerk seasoning
- 1 (3-lb.) boneless pork loin roast, trimmed
- 1/4 cup brown sugar blend sweetener
- 1/4 cup bourbon

1. Stir together lite soy sauce and jerk seasoning. Place roast in a 2-gal. zip-top plastic freezer bag. Pour soy sauce mixture over roast. Seal bag, and chill 2 to 12 hours, turning occasionally.



LEFT: Colorful Power Salad combines the tart crispness of apples with sweet potatoes and raisins in a recipe that adds pizzazz and fiber to potato salad. **BELOW:** Founding members of Hebni Nutrition Consultants Fabiola D. Gaines, Roniece A. Weaver, and Ellareetha T. Carson used their skills as registered dietitians to create a group focused on teaching the public about good nutrition.

2. Preheat grill to 350° to 400° (medium-high). Remove roast from marinade, discarding marinade. Pat roast dry with paper towels. Let stand at room temperature 30 minutes.

3. Stir together brown sugar blend sweetener and bourbon in a microwave-safe glass measuring cup. Microwave at HIGH 1 minute or until sugar blend is dissolved, stirring after 30 seconds.

4. Grill roast, covered with grill lid, over 350° to 400° (medium-high) heat 25 minutes. Baste with brown sugar blend mixture; turn and baste other side. Grill, covered with grill lid, 20 minutes or until a meat thermometer inserted into thickest portion registers 145°, basting after 10 minutes. Remove from heat, and let stand 10 minutes before slicing.

Note: For testing purposes only, we used *Splenda Brown Sugar Blend Sweetener*.

Sautéed Spinach

MAKES 8 TO 10 SERVINGS; **PREP:** 5 MIN., **COOK:** 4 MIN.

This side was inspired by a recipe in The New Soul Food Cookbook for People With Diabetes by Fabiola D. Gaines and Roniece A. Weaver.

2 (10-oz.) bags fresh spinach, thoroughly washed
2 garlic cloves, minced
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. pepper
2 tsp. olive oil

1. Sauté spinach and next 3 ingredients in hot oil in a large nonstick Dutch oven over medium-high heat 3 to 4 minutes or until slightly wilted.

Shrimp on Flats

MAKES 10 TO 12 APPETIZER SERVINGS;

PREP: 20 MIN., **COOK:** 4 MIN.,

COOL: 30 MIN., **BROIL:** 5 MIN.

You can make the salad for this appetizer up to 24 hours in advance.

12 oz. unpeeled, large raw shrimp
1 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
1 tsp. freshly ground pepper
1/4 tsp. salt
1 Tbsp. fresh lime juice, divided
1/4 cup loosely packed fresh flat-leaf parsley
1/4 cup fat-free sour cream
1/4 cup plain low-fat yogurt
1/4 cup finely chopped fresh tarragon*
3 Tbsp. chopped fresh chives
2 Tbsp. capers, drained
2 tsp. extra virgin olive oil
1 (8.5-oz.) French bread baguette, cut into 1/4-inch-thick slices

1. Peel shrimp; devein, if desired. Stir together shrimp and 1 Tbsp. olive oil in large nonstick skillet; sprinkle with pepper and salt.

2. Cook shrimp over medium-high heat 1 1/2 to 2 minutes on each side or just until shrimp turn pink. Remove shrimp to a large bowl, and toss with 1 tsp. lime juice. Cool completely (about 30 minutes). Finely chop shrimp.

3. Preheat oven to broil. Process parsley, sour cream, yogurt, and remaining 2 tsp. lime juice in a food processor or blender until parsley is finely chopped. Season parsley sauce

with salt and pepper to taste.

4. Stir together shrimp, tarragon, and next 3 ingredients in large bowl. Place 1 Tbsp. shrimp mixture on top of each slice of French bread, and place on a baking sheet.

5. Broil 5 inches from heat 4 to 5 minutes or until shrimp mixture is lightly browned. Remove from oven, and drizzle with parsley sauce. Serve immediately.

*1 Tbsp. finely chopped fresh thyme may be substituted.

Hebni Banana Pudding

MAKES 10 (1/2-CUP) SERVINGS;

PREP: 30 MIN.; **CHILL:** 2 HR., 5 MIN.

This banana dessert is the signature recipe for the Hebni dietitians. We made chic individual servings, but you can serve it family style too.

4 medium bananas, cut into 1/4-inch slices
1/2 cup orange juice
1 (1-oz.) package fat-free, sugar-free vanilla instant pudding mix
2 cups 1% low-fat milk
1 (8-oz.) container fat-free frozen whipped topping, thawed
50 reduced-fat vanilla wafers

1. Place bananas in a medium bowl. Pour orange juice over bananas, and stir gently.

2. Prepare vanilla pudding according to package directions in a large bowl using low-fat milk. Cover and chill 5 minutes. Stir in whipped topping.

3. Drain bananas, discarding juice. Layer pudding, vanilla wafers, and banana slices in 10 (6-oz.) glasses. Chill 2 hours.

Note: To serve family style, layer one-fourth each of vanilla wafers, bananas, and pudding mixture in a 3-qt. glass bowl. Repeat layers 3 times, ending with pudding mixture. Cover and chill 2 to 24 hours. •

Recipes courtesy of *The Family Style Soul Food Diabetes Cookbook* by Fabiola D. Gaines, RD, LD; Roniece A. Weaver, MS, RD, LD; Rojean L. Williams, MS, RD, LD; and Chef Shawn Fralin. The book is available at www.diabetes.org (\$16.95 plus shipping) or in bookstores.

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LEFT: The Calvano girls (from left, Morgan, Madison, and Catherine) with mom Sylvia

BELOW: Sugar-and-Spice Fruit Tamales served with cinnamon-infused Vanilla Sauce is a festive combination that's tough to beat. The dough incorporates canned pumpkin to give it a subtle sweetness, while the filling consists of crushed pineapple and chopped raisins.



Sweet on Tamales

Don't miss this twist on an authentic Mexican treat that's as much fun to make as it is to eat. By **Scott Jones**

Families all over the South have special holiday traditions. Within the Hispanic community, making tamales tops the list. Most folks think of these steamed bundles of goodness as strictly savory, usually filled with pork or chicken. But Sylvia Calvano of Hoover, Alabama, recalls her mother's dessert tamales. "My mom was born and raised in Mexico, so tamales were always an important part of our Christmas celebration," she says. "I loved the sweeter, fruit-filled versions that she made for our family and to share with the neighborhood."

Sylvia has passed along the tradition to her three daughters. "Once you get started, tamales are really easy to make," she adds. "The girls and I make a big batch every year as a way of spreading a little Christmas cheer."

Sugar-and-Spice Fruit Tamales

MAKES ABOUT 14 TAMALES; PREP: 45 MIN., SOAK: 1 HR., COOK: 35 MIN., STAND: 5 MIN.

- 18 dried corn husks
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup vegetable shortening
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups corn masa mix
- 3 Tbsp. light brown sugar
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup warm milk
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup canned pumpkin
- 1 (20-oz.) can crushed pineapple in heavy syrup, drained
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup raisins, chopped
- Kitchen string
- Vanilla Sauce
- Mexican Chocolate Sauce

1. Soak corn husks in hot water to cover

30 minutes. Separate husks, and continue soaking 30 more minutes. Drain husks, and pat dry. Tear 4 smallest husks into 14 strips.

2. Beat shortening at medium speed with a heavy-duty electric stand mixer 2 minutes. Combine masa and next 4 ingredients. Gradually beat masa mixture into shortening. Beat shortening mixture 2 minutes, scraping down sides of bowl as needed.

3. Gradually add warm milk to shortening mixture, beating at medium speed just until blended and scraping down sides as needed. Add pumpkin, and beat at medium speed 3 minutes. Cover dough with plastic wrap.

4. Using hands lightly coated with masa mix, spread about 2 Tbsp. dough into a 3- x 4-inch rectangle on right side of 1 husk, leaving a $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch border on right side and a 2-inch border from narrow bottom end of husk.

5. Spoon about 1 Tbsp. pineapple down center of dough. Sprinkle with about $1\frac{1}{2}$

Make some holiday magic.



make in minutes

Prep: 10 min. Bake: 30 min. Makes: 12 servings

Green Bean Casserole

2 cans (10 3/4 oz. each) Campbell's® Cream of Mushroom Soup (Regular or 98% Fat Free)

1 cup milk

2 tsp. soy sauce

1/4 tsp. ground black pepper

8 cups cooked cut green beans

1 can (6 oz.) French's® French Fried Onions (2 2/3 cups)

1. Stir soup, milk, soy sauce, black pepper, beans and 1 1/3 cups onions in 3-qt. casserole.

2. Bake at 350°F. for 25 min. or until hot. Stir.

3. Top with remaining onions. Bake for 5 min. more.



Go Nuts! Toast 1/2 cup sliced almonds. Add with remaining onions.



Bring on the Bacon: Cook 4 slices bacon until crisp and crumble. Add to green bean mixture.



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Holiday Dinners SPECIAL SECTION



Mom and daughters spend quality time together in the kitchen.

tsp. raisins. Roll up husk, rolling left side over right, enclosing pineapple mixture and raisins completely in dough. Fold bottom narrow end up and over, and secure with husk strips or kitchen string. Repeat procedure with remaining corn husks, dough, pineapple, and raisins.

6. Place 2 tamales side by side, seam sides inward and open ends facing same direction. Tie tamales together with kitchen string, securing bundles at top above dough. Repeat procedure with remaining tamales.

7. Arrange tamale bundles, open ends up, in a steamer basket over boiling water in a large Dutch oven. Cover and steam 35 minutes, adding more boiling water as needed. Remove tamales from Dutch oven, and let stand 5 minutes. Serve with Vanilla Sauce and Mexican Chocolate Sauce.

— SYLVIA CALVANO, HOOVER, ALABAMA

Note: For testing purposes only, we used *Masa Brosa Harina de Maiz Instant Corn Masa*.

Vanilla Sauce

MAKES ABOUT 1 CUP; PREP: 10 MIN.,
COOK: 5 MIN.

<u>3/4 cup whipping cream</u>
<u>1/2 cup firmly packed light brown sugar</u>
<u>1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon</u>
<u>1/8 tsp. ground nutmeg</u>
<u>Pinch of salt</u>
<u>1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise</u>
<u>1 Tbsp. butter</u>

1. Combine whipping cream and next 4 ingredients in a small saucepan. Carefully scrape seeds from vanilla bean into saucepan. Add vanilla bean to saucepan, and cook mixture over medium heat, whisking constantly, until smooth (about 2 minutes). Reduce heat to medium-low. Cook, whisking constantly, 2 to 3 minutes or until thickened.

2. Remove saucepan from heat. Carefully remove vanilla bean. Stir in butter until melted. Serve immediately. Store sauce in an airtight container in refrigerator up to 5 days.



Keep food from sticking to cookie sheets, mixing bowls, even cake pans.

Note: To reheat, warm sauce in a small saucepan over low heat, stirring in 1 to 2 tsp. whipping cream as needed to thin sauce.

Mexican Chocolate Sauce

MAKES ABOUT 1½ CUPS; **PREP:** 5 MIN.,
COOK: 3 MIN.

2 (4.4-oz.) packages Mexican chocolate,
broken into pieces

¾ cup whipping cream

2 tsp. light brown sugar

Pinch of salt

1 Tbsp. butter

1. Combine chocolate, whipping cream, brown sugar, and salt in a small saucepan. Cook, whisking occasionally, over low heat until mixture is smooth and chocolate is melted (about 3 minutes). Remove from heat. Whisk in butter until melted. Serve immediately.

Note: For testing purposes only, we used Nestlé Abuelita Marqueta Mexican Chocolate. ●

“The girls and I make a big batch every year as a way of spreading a little Christmas cheer.” —SYLVIA CALVANO

Test Kitchens Know-how

- With hands lightly coated in corn masa mix, spread about 2 Tbsp. dough into a 3- x 4-inch rectangle on the right side of 1 husk, leaving a ½-inch border on the right side and a 2-inch border from the narrow bottom end of the husk.
- Spoon about 1 Tbsp. pineapple down center of dough, and then sprinkle with about 1½ tsp. chopped raisins.
- Roll up husk, rolling left side over right, enclosing fruit filling completely in dough. Fold the bottom narrow end up and over, and secure with husk strip or kitchen string.



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Irresistible Pecan Goodies

The South's favorite nut shines in these treats. They're so tasty, no one will believe that they're oh-so easy.

By Vicki A. Poellnitz

Crunchy Pecan Pie Bites

MAKES ABOUT 6 DOZEN; **PREP:** 15 MIN.,
BAKE: 10 MIN. PLUS 22 MIN. PER BATCH,
COOL: 30 MIN.

3 cups chopped pecans
¾ cup sugar
¾ cup dark corn syrup
3 large eggs, lightly beaten
2 Tbsp. melted butter
1 tsp. vanilla extract
⅛ tsp. salt
5 (2.1-oz.) packages frozen mini-phylo
pastry shells

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Bake pecans in a single layer in a shallow pan 8 to 10 minutes or until toasted and fragrant.
2. Stir together sugar and corn syrup in a medium bowl. Stir in pecans, eggs, and next 3 ingredients.
3. Spoon about 1 heaping teaspoonful pecan mixture into each pastry shell, and place on 2 large baking sheets.
4. Bake at 350° for 20 to 22 minutes or until set. Remove to wire racks, and let cool completely (about 30 minutes). Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

—ROSE M. CLINTON, ALEXANDRIA, LOUISIANA

Mini Pecan Pies: Substitute 1½ (8-oz.) packages frozen tart shells for frozen mini-phylo pastry shells. Prepare recipe as directed through Step 2. Spoon about ¼ cup pecan mixture into each tart shell. Place tart shells on a large baking sheet. Proceed with recipe as directed in Step 4, increasing bake time to 25 to 30 minutes or until set. Garnish with currants, if desired. Makes 1 dozen. Prep: 15 min., Bake: 30 min.

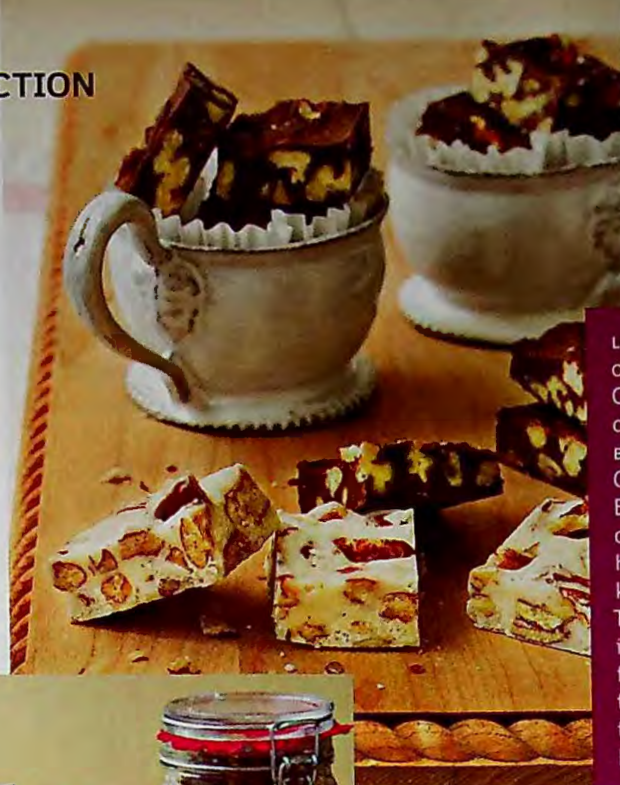


Velvety Pecan Candy

MAKES ABOUT 3 DOZEN (ABOUT 3 LB.);
PREP: 10 MIN., **BAKE:** 10 MIN., **CHILL:** 2 HR.

3 cups coarsely chopped pecans
Wax paper
1½ lb. vanilla or chocolate candy coating,
coarsely chopped
1 (14-oz.) can sweetened condensed milk
¼ tsp. salt
1 tsp. vanilla extract

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Bake pecans in a single layer in a shallow pan 8 to 10 minutes or until toasted and fragrant.
2. Line a 15- x 10-inch jelly-roll pan with wax paper. Lightly grease wax paper.
3. Microwave candy coating, sweetened condensed milk, and salt in a 2-qt. microwave-safe bowl at HIGH 3 to 5 minutes, stirring



LEFT: Make two batches of Velvety Pecan Candy, one each of chocolate and vanilla.
BELOW: Package Crunchy Pecan Pie Bites in pretty airtight containers to add holiday jazz to your kitchen countertops. They can also be frozen in large zip-top plastic freezer bags for up to 1 month; just bring to room temperature before serving.

at 1-minute intervals. Stir until smooth. Stir in vanilla and pecans. Spread in an even layer in prepared pan. Cover and chill 2 hours or until set.

4. Turn candy out onto cutting board, and cut into squares. Store, covered, at room temperature.

—CAROL S. NOBLE, BURGAW, NORTH CAROLINA

Paradise Pecan Cookies

MAKES 1 DOZEN; **PREP:** 15 MIN.,
BAKE: 27 MIN., **COOL:** 20 MIN.

1 cup chopped pecans
Parchment paper
3 egg whites
1 cup sugar
20 saltine crackers, crushed

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Bake pecans in a single layer in a shallow pan 8 to 10 minutes or until toasted and fragrant.
2. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper; lightly grease parchment paper.
3. Beat egg whites at high speed with an electric mixer until soft peaks form. Gradually add sugar, and beat until stiff peaks form. Fold pecans and crackers into egg whites. Drop by rounded tablespoonfuls onto prepared baking sheet.
4. Bake at 350° for 17 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool on baking sheet 1 minute. Remove to wire racks, and cool completely (about 20 minutes). ●

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Super Sides

You've come to the right place for recipes that go from ordinary to extraordinary.

By **Kate Nicholson**

Cindy Crosby

Cindy Crosby of Plano, Texas, knows no fear when it comes to cooking. She loves to create her own concoctions, and if she does consult a recipe, she's sure to add her own personal touch. "I like the excitement of taking a risk or two, maybe adding the unexpected to a classic dish," says Cindy. For instance, in Tropical Sweet Potato Casserole she includes pineapple and coconut, giving the beloved Southern dish a bit of island flair.

We had a hard time deciding which of her recipes to showcase. In the end, we went with some of her favorite side dishes, which are bound to become your most requested too.

Creamy Baked Sweet Onions

MAKES 4 SERVINGS; PREP: 30 MIN.,

COOK: 10 MIN., BAKE: 30 MIN.

2 (10-oz.) packages cipolline or boiler onions, unpeeled*

2 Tbsp. butter

2 Tbsp. all-purpose flour

1½ cups milk

1½ cups (6 oz.) shredded sharp white Cheddar cheese

1 tsp. hot sauce

¼ tsp. salt

⅛ tsp. ground white pepper

¼ cup crushed round buttery crackers

1 Tbsp. melted butter

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Cook onions in a

If you don't know about cipolline onions, Cindy will introduce this Italian favorite to you in her Creamy Baked Sweet Onions.



large saucepan in boiling water to cover 5 to 7 minutes. Drain, cool slightly, and peel. Place in a lightly greased 8-inch square baking dish.

2. Melt 2 Tbsp. butter in a heavy saucepan over medium heat; whisk in flour until smooth, and cook, whisking constantly, 1 minute. Gradually whisk in milk, and cook, whisking constantly, 1 minute or until thickened and bubbly. Add cheese, hot sauce, salt, and ground



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white pepper, and whisk 2 minutes or until cheese is melted. Pour mixture over onions in dish.

3. Stir together crushed crackers and 1 Tbsp. melted butter; sprinkle over top of casserole.

4. Bake at 350° for 25 to 30 minutes or until bubbly.

**20 oz. sweet onions, peeled and cut into wedges, may be substituted. Omit boiling onions in Step 1; peel and place in baking dish as directed.*

Cornbread 'n' Squash Dressing

MAKES 8 SERVINGS; PREP: 15 MIN.,

COOK: 20 MIN., BAKE: 45 MIN.

An 8-inch skillet or pan of baked cornbread will yield about 5 cups crumbled.

1 lb. yellow squash, coarsely chopped

¾ cup butter

1 large sweet onion, chopped

1 medium-size red bell pepper, chopped

2 celery ribs, chopped

1 (10¾-oz.) can cream of chicken soup

1 (14-oz.) can chicken broth

¾ tsp. freshly ground black pepper

¼ to ½ tsp. ground red pepper

½ tsp. poultry seasoning

5 cups cooked, crumbled cornbread

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Cook squash in boiling water to cover in a large skillet 8 to 10 minutes or just until tender. Drain well on paper towels.

2. Melt butter in skillet over medium-high heat; add onion, bell pepper, and celery, and sauté 8 to 10 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Remove skillet from heat. Stir in soup and next 4 ingredients. Gently stir in cornbread and squash. Spoon mixture into a lightly greased 13- x 9-inch baking dish.

3. Bake at 350° for 40 to 45 minutes or until golden.

Note: *To make ahead, prepare recipe as directed through Step 2. Cover unbaked casserole, and chill up to 24 hours. Let dressing come to room temperature (about 30 minutes), and bake as directed.*

Tropical Sweet Potato Casserole

MAKES 8 SERVINGS; PREP: 15 MIN.;

BAKE: 1 HR., 45 MIN.; COOL: 10 MIN.

6 lb. sweet potatoes

1 (8-oz.) can crushed pineapple, drained

¾ cup firmly packed dark brown sugar

¼ cup butter, softened

¼ cup dark rum

½ tsp. ground cinnamon

1 cup miniature marshmallows

½ cup sweetened flaked coconut

1. Preheat oven to 400°. Bake sweet potatoes 1 hour and 15 minutes or until tender. Let cool 10 minutes, and peel. Reduce oven temperature to 350°.

2. Mash potatoes with a potato masher or fork until smooth, or press through a ricer. Stir in crushed pineapple and next 4 ingredients. Spoon mixture into a lightly greased 13- x 9-inch baking dish.

3. Bake at 350° for 20 minutes. Sprinkle marshmallows and coconut over top, and bake 8 to 10 more minutes or until golden. ●

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Prepare Pan-Seared Filet Mignon in a heavy duty or cast-iron skillet to create a crisp, flavorful exterior and juicy interior. We do not recommend a nonstick skillet for this recipe because the steak will not brown properly.

5 Easy Sauces for Steak

It's hard to beat a perfectly cooked beef tenderloin fillet for a holiday supper. Top it with one of these wonderful sauces to make your entrée even more impressive. By **Marion McGahey**

Grilled Filet Mignon

MAKES 4 SERVINGS; PREP: 5 MIN., COOK: 12 MIN., STAND: 5 MIN.

We cook our tenderloin fillets to medium-rare. If you like your meat cooked medium or well done, increase the grilling or pan-searing time per side. (Cook approximately 1 minute more on each side for medium, 2 minutes more on each side for medium-well, and 3 minutes more on each side for well done.)

4 (6-oz.) beef tenderloin fillets
1 tsp. freshly cracked pepper
1/2 tsp. kosher salt

1. Preheat grill to 350° to 400° (medium-high). Sprinkle fillets with pepper and salt.
2. Grill, covered with grill lid, over 350° to 400° (medium-high) heat 4 to 6 minutes

on each side or to desired degree of doneness. Let stand 5 minutes.

Pan-Seared Filet Mignon

MAKES 4 SERVINGS; PREP: 10 MIN., COOK: 14 MIN., STAND: 5 MIN.

4 (6-oz.) beef tenderloin fillets
1 tsp. freshly cracked pepper
1/2 tsp. kosher salt
2 Tbsp. butter
2 Tbsp. olive oil

1. Sprinkle fillets with pepper and salt.
2. Melt butter with olive oil in a large stainless steel or cast-iron skillet over medium heat. Add fillets, and cook 5 to 7 minutes on each side or to desired degree of doneness. Let stand 5 minutes.

Balsamic-Fig Sauce

MAKES 1 CUP; PREP: 10 MIN., COOK: 7 MIN.
We tried substituting regular balsamic vinegar for aged balsamic vinegar but found the taste too sharp and pungent.

1 cup aged balsamic vinegar
1/3 cup fig preserves
1/3 cup port
1/2 tsp. kosher salt
1/2 tsp. freshly ground pepper
1 Tbsp. cognac (optional)

1. Bring first 5 ingredients to a boil in a saucepan over medium-high heat; reduce heat to medium, and simmer 6 to 7 minutes or until mixture is reduced by half. Remove from heat; stir in cognac, if desired. Serve warm.

— LILLIAN JULOW, GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA

Note: For testing purposes only, we used Alessi 20-Year Balsamic Vinegar aged in wood.

Béarnaise Sauce

MAKES ABOUT 3/4 CUP; PREP: 15 MIN., COOK: 25 MIN.

Try our express version using a mix if you're short on time or not comfortable making it from scratch.

4 shallots, finely chopped (about 1/2 cup)
3/4 cup dry white wine
2 Tbsp. chopped fresh tarragon
3 Tbsp. white wine vinegar
1/4 tsp. ground black pepper
3 egg yolks
1/8 tsp. salt
1/8 tsp. ground red pepper
2 Tbsp. lemon juice
1/2 cup butter, cut into pieces and at room temperature

1. Cook first 5 ingredients in a small saucepan over medium heat, stirring occasionally, 8 to 10 minutes or until liquid has evaporated.
2. Pour water to depth of 1 1/2 inches into a 3 1/2-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium, and simmer.
3. Whisk together egg yolks, salt, and red pepper in a 3-qt. heatproof bowl; gradually add lemon juice, whisking constantly. Place bowl over simmering water, and cook, whisking constantly, 3 minutes or until mixture thickens.
4. Whisk butter pieces, in 3 batches, into egg mixture, whisking constantly until

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McCormick® Perfect Turkey Gravy

2 pkg. McCormick® Turkey Gravy Mix
1/4 cup flour

3 cups cold water
1 cup turkey pan drippings or turkey broth

MIX McCormick Turkey Gravy Mix and flour in large saucepan. Gradually stir in water and turkey drippings with wire whisk until smooth.

STIRRING frequently, cook on medium-high heat until gravy comes to a boil. Reduce heat to low and simmer 5 minutes or until thickened, stirring occasionally (gravy will continue to thicken upon standing).

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SPECIAL SECTION Holiday Dinners

butter is melted and mixture is smooth and thickened. Remove from heat. Stir in shallot mixture. Serve immediately.

Speedy Béarnaise Sauce: Prepare 1 (0.9-oz.) envelope béarnaise sauce mix according to package directions, stirring in 1 Tbsp. lemon juice and 1 Tbsp. chopped fresh tarragon during last minute of cook time.

Note: For testing purposes only, we used McCormick Béarnaise Sauce Mix. The classic Béarnaise Sauce cannot be made ahead. However, Speedy Béarnaise Sauce can be made 1 day ahead and stored in the refrigerator. To reheat, place bowl over simmering water, and cook, whisking constantly, until mixture is warm.

Creamy Horseradish Sauce

MAKES ABOUT ¼ CUP; PREP: 10 MIN.

¼ cup reduced-fat sour cream

1½ tsp. horseradish

1 tsp. Dijon mustard

1. Stir together all ingredients. Serve immediately, or cover and chill up to 3 hours. —NORA HENSHAW, OKEMAH, OKLAHOMA

Green Peppercorn Sauce

MAKES 2 CUPS; PREP: 15 MIN.,

COOK: 16 MIN.

2 Tbsp. butter

3 shallots, chopped (about ⅓ cup)

2 garlic cloves, minced

2 Tbsp. green peppercorns in brine, drained

1 (14-oz.) can fat-free beef broth

⅓ cup brandy*

2 Tbsp. Dijon mustard

⅓ cup heavy cream

2 tsp. cornstarch

1. Melt butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat; add next 3 ingredients, and sauté 2 minutes or just until tender. Remove from heat. Stir in broth, brandy, and mustard, and return to heat. Bring to a boil, and cook, stirring occasionally, 12 minutes or until mixture is reduced by half. 2. Stir together cream and cornstarch until smooth. Add cornstarch mixture to sauce, and cook, stirring constantly, 2 minutes or until thickened.

—DOREEN SIDOR, ROANOKE, VIRGINIA

*Apple juice may be substituted.



Macadamia Pesto is a spirited update to the classic recipe and is terrific over Grilled or Pan-Seared Filet Mignon (or your favorite cut of steak). For a smashing new presentation of roasted potatoes, gently press them down with the back of a spoon as soon as they're out of the oven and then top with a drizzle of olive oil and chopped fresh basil.

Macadamia Pesto

MAKES 1½ CUPS; PREP: 10 MIN.

This hearty recipe can be covered with plastic wrap and kept chilled in the refrigerator for up to 10 days. Be sure to press plastic wrap directly on top of pesto to keep the green color. It can also be frozen for up to two months.

1½ cups loosely packed fresh basil leaves

½ cup salted macadamia nuts

4 large garlic cloves, minced

¾ cup extra virgin olive oil

¾ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese

½ tsp. salt

¼ tsp. pepper

1. Process first 3 ingredients in a food processor 3 minutes until smooth, stopping to scrape down sides as needed. With processor running, pour oil through food chute in a slow, steady stream. Add cheese, salt, and pepper, and process 2 seconds or until smooth. ●

—HANNAH L. LOWTHER, BEVERLY HILLS, FLORIDA

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Test Kitchens Director Lyda Burnette and husband Kane celebrate their daughter's first Christmas with a long-standing tradition—fireside brunch.



You don't have to sit at the dining room table to break out your best. Take a casual approach, and serve Gentlemen's Casserole and Winter Fruit Compote fireside using your special china and silver.



Christmas Eve Fun

You won't be left out of any of the festivities with our Test Kitchens Director's make-ahead brunch. By **Lyda Burnette**

My husband, Kane, and I have always enjoyed a fireside brunch on Christmas Eve morning while listening to A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols on National Public Radio. This menu is mostly make-ahead—so like us, you can relax and enjoy the beginning of the holiday.

Gentlemen's Casserole

MAKES 2 SERVINGS; PREP: 25 MIN., BAKE: 20 MIN., COOK: 6 MIN.

This recipe easily doubles to serve four. You can bake puff pastry shells the day before. Remove tops and reheat on a baking sheet at 350° for five minutes.

- 1 (10-oz.) package frozen puff pastry shells
- 1 Tbsp. butter
- 1/3 cup chopped cooked ham
- 1 Tbsp. chopped green onions
- 4 large eggs, lightly beaten
- Gruyère Cheese Sauce

- 1/4 cup grated Gruyère cheese
- Dash of paprika
- Garnish: chopped green onions

1. Bake 4 pastry shells according to package directions. Reserve remaining shells for another use.
2. Melt butter in a medium-size nonstick skillet over medium heat; add ham and green onions. Sauté 2 minutes or until green onions are tender. Add eggs, and cook, without stirring, 1 to 2 minutes or until eggs begin to set on bottom. Gently draw cooked edges away from sides of pan to form large pieces. Cook, stirring occasionally, 1 to 2 minutes or until eggs are thickened and moist. (Do not over stir.) Gently fold in Gruyère Cheese Sauce.
3. Spoon egg mixture into prepared pastry shells. Sprinkle with cheese and paprika. Garnish, if desired. Serve immediately.

Chicken-and-White Cheddar

Casserole: Substitute extra-sharp white Cheddar cheese for Gruyère, Cheddar

Cheese Sauce for Gruyère Cheese Sauce, and chopped cooked chicken for ham. Proceed with recipe as directed.

Gruyère Cheese Sauce:

MAKES ABOUT 3/4 CUP; PREP: 10 MIN., COOK: 6 MIN.

You can make this up to two days ahead and store in the refrigerator. Reheat in a microwave-safe bowl at HIGH 1 1/2 minutes, stirring halfway through.

- 3/4 cup milk
- 1 Tbsp. butter
- 1 Tbsp. all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup grated Gruyère cheese
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/8 tsp. pepper

1. Microwave milk in a 2-cup microwave-safe glass measuring cup at HIGH 1 minute.
2. Melt butter in a small heavy saucepan over medium heat; gradually whisk in flour. Cook 1 minute, whisking constantly. Gradually whisk in warm milk; cook over medium heat, whisking constantly, 3 to 5 minutes or until thickened and bubbly. Remove from heat; whisk in cheese, salt, and pepper.

Cheddar Cheese Sauce: Substitute extra-sharp white Cheddar cheese for Gruyère. Proceed with recipe as directed.

➔ turn to page 160

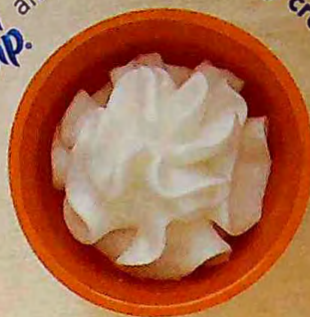
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Bake a batch of Cranberry-Orange Tea Bread Muffins, and take extras to your neighbors with a teatime gift.



When I was a child, my mom read 'Twas the Night Before Christmas to me every Christmas Eve. This year I handed down the tradition and read the same copy to my daughter, Martha Helen.

LYDA BURNETTE

Winter Fruit Compote

MAKES 4 SERVINGS; PREP: 15 MIN., COOK: 25 MIN., STAND: 5 MIN., COOL: 30 MIN., CHILL: 2 HR.

To avoid any leftover Champagne, buy a split (187 milliliter) of Champagne for this recipe.

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar
1 cup Champagne or sparkling wine
2 Ruby Red grapefruits, peeled and sectioned
2 oranges, peeled and sectioned
Garnish: maraschino cherries with stems

1. Cook sugar in a small saucepan over medium heat, tilting pan occasionally, 10 minutes or until caramel colored. Remove from heat, and gradually pour Champagne over sugar (mixture will bubble and seize). Let stand 5 minutes.
2. Cook mixture over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally, 15 minutes or until sugar is dissolved (mixture will be syrupy). Remove from heat, and let cool 30 minutes.

3. Combine grapefruit and orange sections in a bowl. Pour Champagne mixture over fruit. Cover and chill 2 to 24 hours. Garnish, if desired.

White Grape Winter Fruit Compote:

Substitute white grape juice for Champagne. Proceed with recipe as directed.

Cranberry-Orange Tea Bread Muffins

MAKES 2 DOZEN; PREP: 25 MIN., BAKE: 35 MIN.

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped pecans
2 cups all-purpose flour
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. salt
 $\frac{1}{2}$ (12-oz.) package fresh cranberries (about 2 cups)
1 cup sugar
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup butter, softened
1 large egg, lightly beaten
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup orange juice

Make-Ahead Timeline

Up to two months ahead:

- Bake Cranberry-Orange Tea Bread Muffins, but leave them unglazed. Freeze in a zip-top plastic freezer bag.

Day before:

- Make Candied Kumquat Slices for muffins. Cover loosely with plastic wrap, and let stand at room temperature.
- Make Gruyère Cheese Sauce for Gentlemen's Casserole. Cover and chill.
- Make Winter Fruit Compote, and chill.
- Bake puff pastry shells for Gentlemen's Casserole. Store at room temperature in a zip-top plastic freezer bag.

Day of:

- Make Kane's Peppery Bloody Mary.
- Make Orange-Cream Cheese Glaze.
- Thaw muffins at room temperature; top with glaze and kumquat slices.
- Reheat puff pastry shells on a baking sheet at 350° for 5 minutes.
- Microwave Gruyère Cheese Sauce.
- Scramble eggs, and fold in Cheese Sauce.

24 aluminum foil miniature baking cups
Vegetable cooking spray
Orange-Cream Cheese Glaze
Garnish: Candied Kumquat Slices

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Bake pecans in a single layer in a shallow pan 8 to 10 minutes or until toasted and fragrant, stirring occasionally.
2. Whisk together flour, baking powder, and salt.
3. Pulse cranberries and sugar in a food processor 3 to 4 times or just until chopped.
4. Beat butter at medium speed with an electric mixer until creamy. Add egg, beating until well blended. Gradually add flour mixture alternately with orange juice, beginning and ending with flour mixture. Beat at low speed until blended after each addition. Stir in cranberry mixture and pecans.
5. Place baking cups in miniature muffin pans; coat with cooking spray. Spoon batter into baking cups, filling completely.
6. Bake at 350° for 25 minutes or until a wooden pick inserted in center comes clean. Remove from pans to a wire rack; spoon Orange-Cream Cheese Glaze over

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ABOVE: Pickled okra, rather than celery, makes a tangy stir stick for Kane's Peppery Bloody Mary. RIGHT: Muddle the fresh herbs to release their flavor. If you don't have a muddler, use a wooden spoon.



warm muffins. Garnish with Candied Kumquat Slices, if desired.
Note: To make ahead, place unglazed muffins in a heavy-duty zip-top plastic freezer bag; freeze up to two months. Let thaw at room temperature before glazing.

Orange-Cream Cheese Glaze:

MAKES ABOUT 1 CUP; PREP: 10 MIN.

- 1 (3-oz.) package cream cheese, softened
- 1 Tbsp. orange juice
- ¼ tsp. vanilla extract
- 1½ cups sifted powdered sugar

1. Beat cream cheese at medium speed with an electric mixer until creamy. Add orange juice and vanilla; beat until smooth. Gradually add powdered sugar, beating until smooth.



Kane says, "Lots of fresh lemon juice is the key to a great Bloody Mary."

Candied Kumquat Slices:

MAKES ABOUT 3½ DOZEN; PREP: 15 MIN., COOK: 10 MIN., STAND: 24 HR.

You can strain the syrup left after making kumquat slices to flavor iced tea or lemonade. Cut 8 kumquats into ⅛-inch-thick slices. Stir together ½ cup sugar and ½ cup water in a small heavy saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium heat. Reduce heat to medium-low, and stir in kumquat slices; simmer 10 minutes. Remove from heat; remove kumquat slices, 1 at a time, shaking off excess sugar-water mixture. Place kumquats in a bowl with ¼ cup sugar; toss to coat. Transfer kumquats to wax paper. Cover loosely with plastic wrap, and let stand 24 hours.

— CINDY LUCY, TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA

Kane's Peppery Bloody Mary

MAKES 2 SERVINGS; PREP: 10 MIN.

This recipe received our Test Kitchens' highest rating.

- 1 tsp. chopped fresh basil
- 1 tsp. chopped fresh cilantro
- 1 tsp. chopped fresh chives
- 1½ cups tomato juice
- ½ cup pepper vodka
- 6 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 1½ to 3 tsp. green hot sauce
- 1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce

Pass It Down

As our family grows, so do our traditions. Old ones become new again when they are passed to the next generation. Here are a few traditions that my family treasures; yours may enjoy them also.

- Start a themed ornament collection for your children. Each year my father gave me a silver ornament. Last year I began my daughter's collection.
- Serve a signature dish at each holiday. My mother is famous for her scalloped oysters. One year oysters were sold out at the grocery, and my brother complained that it just didn't feel like Christmas without that dish on the table.
- Celebrate each addition to the family with personalized stockings. This is the perfect way to mark the birth of a child or make a new daughter-in-law feel like a member of the family. All of our stockings are hand-knitted and have our names on them.
- Use your holiday china for the entire season, not just one day. Mom always used her Christmas china the entire month of December. This was our first clue that Santa was on his way.

Large pinch of celery salt

Pinch of sea salt

Freshly ground pepper to taste

Garnishes: pickled okra, lemon wedges

1. Combine first 3 ingredients in a cocktail shaker. Press leaves against bottom of cup using a muddler or wooden spoon to release flavors; stir in tomato juice and next 7 ingredients. Transfer half of mixture to a 2-cup glass measuring cup.

2. Place ice in cocktail shaker, filling halfway full. Cover with lid, and shake vigorously until thoroughly chilled. Strain into a glass over ice. Repeat procedure with remaining tomato mixture. Garnish, if desired.

Note: For testing purposes only, we used Absolut Peppar Vodka and Tabasco Green Pepper Sauce.

Kane's Bloody Mary: Substitute regular vodka for pepper vodka. Proceed with recipe as directed. ●

Points South

OUR LIFE AND TIMES

• SOUTHERNERS •

Life on the Vine

This former NFL great followed his heart's true desire straight to Texas wine country. By **Scott Jones**

For many, retirement is all about enjoying life in the slow lane. Not for Alphonse Dotson. This Texas native and former defensive tackle for the Oakland Raiders works harder than ever growing premium wine grapes.

Alphonse took the first step in realizing this life-long dream back in 1997 by establishing Certenberg Vineyards—named in honor of his grandfather Alphonse Certenberg—in the sandy hills of Voca, Texas (population 50). Eleven years later, he grows one of the most sought-after grapes in the state, according to Fall Creek Vineyards owner Ed Auler.

Alphonse is ready for the next chapter: winemaking. He and his wife, Martha, hope to release their first vintage of Dotson-Cervantes Muscat Canelli in the fall of 2009. (Cervantes is Martha's maiden name.)

A popular white wine throughout Texas, Muscat Canelli is produced in a variety of styles, from light and crisp to sweet and rich. Alphonse says their wine will have lots of floral aromas and be, in his words, a little bit bolder than most. "I want folks to remember this wine," he says with his trademark smile. I predict they will. •

My Casserole Crisis

I confess: It took me nearly 30 years to learn how to make this Southern dish. By **Kim Cross**



My next-door neighbor had to throw out his back to bring me to terms with my gravest shortcoming as a Southerner. What do we do to help a friend faced with death, disaster, or back surgery? Make casseroles, of course. I was mortified to realize that I'd never made one. And I didn't have the foggiest notion where to begin.

I know, I know. Bless my heart.

Now, before I get myself in trouble with Mom, let me affirm that my mother is an extraordinary cook. Her culinary prowess is praised in hushed tones by anyone who has tasted her chili. My most fastidious foodie friend calls every Thanksgiving to get my mom's recipe for candied yams. Mom can fry fish and boil collards with the best—but she never did make a casserole.

So I consulted my girlfriends for advice. They seemed mildly shocked, as if I'd admitted I wasn't sure exactly how to operate a toothbrush. "It's so easy," they said,

reciting recipes from memory, "and they are really good."

I scribbled notes on a napkin and rushed to the store, ticking off each ingredient with growing apprehension. Rotisserie chicken...check. Cream of mushroom soup...check. Grated cheese...check. Frozen broccoli...hmm, why not fresh? Mayonnaise...really? Corn flakes...seriously?

I assembled the casserole with mounting anxiety. It didn't look right. It didn't even look edible. I called my friend and left a panicked message. "Help! I'm having a casserole crisis! Should I dilute the cream of mushroom soup? Am I supposed to defrost the broccoli?" She didn't return my call in time, so I gathered my wits and just guessed.

As I folded mayonnaise into cold cream of mushroom soup—ew!—I wondered if this was all a very mean joke. The cold

mushroom-mayo porridge looked like wallpaper paste and smelled decidedly less appetizing. I dutifully followed my girlfriends' instructions and pictured them sharing a belly laugh. Then I imagined my poor neighbor doubled over with food poisoning or just plain disgust. That wouldn't be good for his back.

After much deliberation, I decided to take my chances. I plodded across the front yard and sheepishly presented the casserole with a million apologies for how bad it was likely to taste. If it was good, I'd take the credit. If it was awful, we could blame my friends.

The neighbors peeked under the foil and inquired what was in it. Cringing, I told them, half expecting them to recoil in horror. Instead, their eyebrows raised in interest and they cooed approval. "That sounds delicious!" Surely they were just being nice.

The next day, I left town on a business trip. As I hopped on the plane, I wondered with dread if I'd delivered a ticking food bomb. Whenever I'm on the road, the neighbors invite my husband to dinner. He'd likely partake in the casserole, and I knew he'd give me a brutally honest report. That is, if he could speak between the dry heavens.

"It was good," he said. That's a rave review from a man whose most enthusiastic assessment is, "That's neat!" The neighbors confirmed his appraisal, reassuring me that my casserole had caused them no gastrointestinal woes. I asked my husband to elaborate. "It wasn't gourmet," he said. "It was a casserole." ●

Kim Cross survived on casseroles and the kindness of others during her first three months as a new mom. Now a casserole connoisseur, she plans to pass her recipes on to her son, Austin.

What do we do to help a friend faced with death, disaster, or back surgery? Make casseroles, of course.

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Regal and Majestic

Elks are thriving in North Carolina's Cataloochee Valley. By **Gary D. Ford**

Early each morning elks as regal as kings drift down from the high forests into the misty meadows of Cataloochee Valley in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Visitors, who arose in the night and drove a fingernail of a mountain road into this isolated valley, click away with cameras.

"People love to see wild animals," comments Kim DeLozier, the park's wildlife biologist who led the effort to reintroduce 52 of the long-absent elk into these uplands in 2001. Now more than

go preen and pose during this season with an inelegant name—the rut.

Bulls bugle out their challenges and butt heads with rivals in antler-rattling contests. Calves will drop late next spring—hopefully, for the growth of the herd, more females than males.

The elk are finding their place as symbols on the hoof in a majestic land, with as little intrusion as possible from man.

"Let an elk be an elk here," Kim says. "Let them tell us if they have a future in these mountains." ●

PHOTOGRAPH: MARY MARGARET CHAMBLISS

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